

Football and College Spirit

By PROF. M. M. FOGG

"We are thankful we got whipped this year," will be Alma Mater's Thanksgiving grace today, for through defeat this University has gained some thing which humdrum victory would not have brought it. The idea that to have success in sports we must have victory, is now obsolete. The notion that the main thing is to win rather than to do a man's work like a man, is dead. The men and women of this University—the University itself—has said to its football team: "Fine endeavor, not the score, wins my praise." Not in vague thinking but in actual deed, the students have made theirs the true spirit of the University—the idealism on which it was founded and on which it must stand if it stands at all.

By "college spirit," the lack of which at Nebraska heretofore has been a commonplace theme for regret, and to the lack of which the Princetonian to whose systematic discipline Nebraska owes, clearly enough, her long series of victories, has often referred—by "college spirit" is not meant roping a helper into the belfry a la Princeton, nor groaning at the college choir when it is particularly "rotten" a la Brown, nor Harvard's memorable "Bloody Monday," now happily supplanted by the reception to Freshmen; nor such a shredded-shirt, midnight battle with the "Sophs" under the "cerulean empyrean," as a Freshman theme-writer puts it, as the writer rigged through not so long ago. These high and heroic services to the cause of civilization, though not so wicked as some persons make them out, indisputably not so bad as some other things that are worse, are not the only instruments of culture. What genuine college spirit means to the man it has mastered, one could see at Princeton, for instance—how it pulls a thousand graduates from the four quarters of the country around the fountain from which in youth they drew new life; how it leaps to the lip as they pledge their faith again in the ideals of the old college to the thunderous melody of "Old Nassau." For these men Princeton is not the pile of marble and ivy-encircled granite; it is an ideal—the Fair Mistress who still beckons them on to learning and to devotion to principle.

Of devotion to what a college stands for, no company of students can have too much—not a theoretical devotion but a practical devotion that exhibits itself not merely at commencement reunions, but by constant, lively interest in whatever good work the University as such engages. To go to college is not simply to join a society nor to go to recitations and let the professor funnel one full of facts for parroting which back to him one may, though he oughtn't to, get a diploma. It is much more than this. It is life. The truth that the life is as important as the work will be one of the truths driven home to our Rhodes scholars at ancient Oxford.

Of this college spirit Nebraska, like many another school, has not had enough. And for various reasons. In the first place, our students—the men in particular—either from preference or pressure, haven't much leisure. For weal or woe, this rushing, red-blooded civilization of the West leaves them neither time to read nor to reflect enough even on their immediate concrete work, not to speak of that larger, intangible thing, the University.

Another reason why we lack college spirit is that our life lacks unity. We do not get together often, nor do we stay together long. For this the absence of dormitories is largely responsible. This lack all her one hundred and fifty years of richly accumulated tradition could not overcome for Columbia University, so she is building the dormitories to centralize college life and to generate college spirit. The University of Nebraska flies into some twenty-five hundred bits six times a week at 6 p. m! At Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Cornell, Pennsylvania, the students are concentrated. Up from the ground and down from the clouds—or windows—the writer has seen come at a signal a thousand students—the University militant breathing one spirit. The air there hangs heavy with college spirit. The intentions of the good folk we assert that dormitories wouldn't help Nebraska, one can respect; but their thinking—well, it's grounded on air. Here each person goes too much on his own tangent. In theory democracy gets us together; in practice, it doesn't seem to. Each one of us is a kind of miniature aristocracy paddling his own canoe. "Nobody here seem to care to do a fellow a good turn," said a frank and sincere Freshman the other day.

Now, on this campus there is something immensely bigger than any student or all the students. American civilization in its oldest parts is, at best, juvenile, in swaddling clothes. In our part of it the most impressive object for the student to behold is the great, truth-seeking spirit of the University, majestically marching on. Sports may come and sports may go but that goes on forever.

These handicaps to a vigorous college spirit, football in a large measure is overcoming, has overcome. The celebration of a victory, but especially the celebration of a defeat, makes us pause, snatches us at least an hour of leisure in which to crawl out of the hole in which we've burrowed and look upon one phase of university life. More important yet, football gets us together, pulls us together, makes us pull together. It is crystallizing, if but for an hour or two at a time, most of the twenty-five hundred particles into a unit.

For the University this vivification and crystallization of college spirit means very much. Football defeat this year stimulated imagination. Through defeat we have caught another thrill—let us hope it will be a steady glow—of enthusiasm for the University, a healthy, full-pulsed spirit of devotion to the impersonal University. This enthusiasm will be reflected in all phases of college life. In general, it will make us more "safe and sane." It will save us from "yellowness" of all species, whether in writing or speaking. It will give us large-mindedness, open-mindedness. It will save us, when a little friction comes from getting an intellectual hot-box. It will rise against professionalism, if it appears, for football is sentiment and it ought to die, as it will, when it turns to business—the transformation that has debauched the sport and besmirched the escutcheon of many a college. No man mastered by college spirit auctions himself off to the college world at \$300 a hundredweight!

Through defeat we have climbed to something better than one more victory. To hurrah for victory is easy

enough; to hurrah for defeat calls for another kind of stuff. That means insight, discrimination, idealism. It was a sage soliloquy of Harvard undergraduates after the last of many successive defeats by Yale in rowing: "After all there are many things in life worth while besides beating Yale!" For college spirit at Nebraska that university welcome to the defeated victors from Minnesota speaks with auspicious eloquence, for it says: "Whether you come home with your shields or on them, I judge you not so much by what you do as how you do it." That standard is set and set for good. We shall say that for the

A New Athletic Field.

Coach Booth's repeated statement that athletics at Nebraska cannot continue to thrive without better provision being made for them in the way of new quarters, has again resulted in the demand for a new athletic field. The erection of the physics building on the old field has cut down its dimensions to such an extent that baseball on the campus will doubtless prove an impossibility, while much of the hard luck that has beset the Cornhuskers in football this fall is to be directly traced to the cramped and altogether wretched condition of the football field. The very soil of the field is not suitable either for a diamond, track, or gridiron. Men have been con-



COACH W. COWLES BOOTH

University that day was not worth all last year's monotonous victories?

Jack Best.

No inconsiderable part has been played in the past five years by Jack Best, the trainer of the team. By his devotion to duty, the team, and the interests of the university Jack has now the affection of every person at all interested in Nebraska athletics, and has done much toward keeping his charges in good condition to meet the hard contests in which they have participated.

The picture of Jack and his little grandson, which The Nebraskan prints on another page today, lends hope that when Jack can no longer be with us there will at least be more of his stock to fill his place. If young Jack shall continue as he has evidently begun, he will soon be able to fill Charley Borg's position with much credit to himself and to the university.

stantly on our hospital list this year on account of injuries received through the flint-like roughness and hardness of the soil of the campus. The ground is even too hard to even provide a track on which fast time can be made by the runners. The diamond has to be worked upon constantly to keep it in any sort of shape for base-ball. So bad have the conditions become, in fact, that it is now universally recognized that other arrangements must be made. It is probable, however, that this will be possible. The writer of this article was told not long ago by the officials in charge of the grounds and buildings of the university, that the next legislature will be asked to purchase or condemn the two blocks north of the present campus, to be used for this purpose.

AN ALUMNUS.