

The Chancellor's Column.

ON ATHLETICS.

The world has always admired courage, nerve, grit, endurance. In earlier days much of this admiration was wasted on those who were simply perfect animals. In our later and better life we demand a manifestation of intellect—and this means skill, or what we sometimes rather vaguely term "science."

There is scarcely a phase of modern existence which makes as great a demand for mettle—a combination of grip and grit and mental alertness—as does the athletic work of our Universities. The training necessary to secure even respectable standing is sharp and continuous, and is intelligently planned. The "combinations" of a game, the "team play," the necessity for instant decision and correct decision, the forethought which must sweep all possibilities in a flash—all this makes a demand equal to that placed upon a chess-player; but a demand that must be met under very different conditions. In the rush and confusion of foot-ball, for instance, it is often a wonder that a man knows his own legs! But that he can also keep his head, and keep it well at work, is a marvel indeed. When he adds to this the ability to keep his temper—one of the surest proofs of the highest form of self-control—it is easy to feel the educational force and value of athletics.

For, after all, this athletic life, even in its extreme phases, is only another proof that the University is what it professes to be—as much as possible like the world into which the students are about to enter. A kindly Providence has wisely ordered that for the most part humanity moves onward—and constantly somewhat upward—with a steady flow, in a quiet way, even in a rather monotonous way. The competition of which we often speak is not so very sharp; most men earn a livelihood without either prolonged training or severe effort. The "floor work" in the world's gymnasium is possible to nearly all, and gives a certain all-around

health and vigor to all. But to every community there come certain crises which can only be met by a few, struggles in which only the masterful may safely engage, contests which call for all the best qualities in most active play. Whether it be the sudden uprising of a factious populace which must be quelled with an iron hand, or the swift advance of some gigantic and newly-formed corporation threatening the very life of the body commercial—a hundred times and in a thousand ways some men are called on for extraordinary service under extraordinary conditions. They must pull themselves quickly together, determine at once the conditions of the conflict, and strain every fibre till the victory is won. "These are the times that try men's souls," and happy is the man who when so tried is not found wanting.

So there seems a positive educational value in University athletics which is often overlooked by both contestant and spectator. It must not be over-estimated by the participants, to the point of neglect of other University work; neither should it be underestimated by the University authorities. The season for athletics should be short, games should be few in number and played within reasonable distance of the respective institutions, and both practice and games so arranged as to interfere as little as possible with University work. Men should select some one direction for work and be content with that; there should be different teams for foot-ball, base-ball, la crosse, tennis, boating, golf, and cricket. And when a man has fairly mastered either, and has approved himself in contests, he should withdraw in order that others may have the incentive and advantage of training.

As for us poor common mortals, who can only stand about the ground and cheer and blow horns and wave flags and hug our men and hate the other fellows—we ought not to forget our duty to ourselves in our more limited sphere; keeping in mind the work which we can do, and doing it with all faithfulness; and possibly consoling ourselves with an occasional re-reading of the fable of "The Hare and the Tortoise."