Physical Training at Technology.
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Considering the wonderful development in college athletics during the past fifteen years, it is strange, indeed, that at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where practical work is placed above mere theoretical teaching, so little attention is paid to the physical development of the student.

We have had a gymnasium to be sure, but the apparatus in that gymnasium is almost identical with that which was in the same building twenty years ago, when that building was on the site of the present Walker building. Even at that time, the Athletic Association was constantly obliged to furnish some of the paraphernalia in order to carry out the small games which we had in those days, and the rent from the lockers was absorbed in the general Institute funds, and was not set aside for the renewal of apparatus.

The movement now on foot for the erection of an adequate gymnasium, by the Alumni, is a most praiseworthy undertaking, and will result in great benefit to the students, but it is well nigh impossible to create interest among the majority of the under-graduates, unless a certain amount of exercise is required of each man.

Further than this, individual interest is always created by the teams which represent the college. Unless recognition is given to these teams, so that the students can see the practical advantages in belonging to such teams, the use of a gymnasium will remain limited. Moreover, team work in athletics is one of the best promoters of self-control and discipline to the individual. From still another stand, a successful athletic team is one of the best advertisements a college can have.

On the other hand, physical training is not to be carried so far as to become pre-eminent in the participator’s mind above his studies, but without, at least, the moral support of the professors and instructors, it is hard, indeed, for a man who wishes to participate in this work and become one of the “Institute Team” to develop properly.

It is argued by some that team work is such an advance on general exercise that it should be frowned upon, and, unfortunately, it is so looked upon by many at the Institute of Technology. The desire for individual glory as a member of a football eleven creates among three or four times as many as can possibly play a desire to be one of the team. This year at the Institute over forty men participated in football practice, and some of these abandoned practice within a week, not because they could not develop sufficiently to become members of the eleven, but for the reason that it was gently suggested to them by higher authorities that they had better drop it. From the facts at hand, this does not appear to have been because the men were falling behind in their Institute work. Some men were “warned” almost as soon as it became known that they were trying for the team.

The moral support, therefore, is what is needed. If the Institute authorities will grant this, instead of forty men trying for a football team, and thus getting the exercise which is most beneficial to them, there would doubtless twice that number appear, to be “tried out.”

The under-graduate, however, who is interested in football or track athletics (which seem to be the only two sports which can be carried on successfully at the Institute) should not be dismayed. The leaven will surely work as it has in other colleges, and the time must come when, at the Institute, as at almost every other college in this country, there will be an “athletic member” of the Faculty, who will have matters pertaining to team work, the gymnasium, etc. directly under his charge, and to whom the same deference will be shown in regard to his opinion, as to that of the head of any department of technical work.