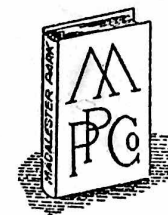


POWER IN ATHLETICS

Glenn Clark



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by

Glenn Clark

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Dedication

*TO THREE HUNDRED ATHLETES
THAT I CALL
"MY BOYS"
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED*

Chapter 1

POWER ON THE GRIDIRON

I.

"YOU WILL FIND IT HARDER TO BEAT BRADDOCK'S FOOTBALL team than to jump over a house."

That was the word that had reached our college. When the coach gathered his men around him that afternoon, he remarked, "Have you been hearing any remarks about jumping over houses?" The boys all nodded.

"Well, I don't want anyone to play on my team this week who can't jump over a house."

They all stared.

"Perhaps you think it impossible to jump over a house. Perhaps I am talking nonsense. How many of you boys could throw a ball over a house?" All hands went up.

"How many could throw it over a college building?" Again all hands went up.

"Do you mean you can throw an immense leather pushball six feet in diameter?"

"No," they all chorused.

"How many could throw this football I hold in my hand over Old Main Building?"

All but Reynolds, the star forward passer of the team, shook their heads.

"Well, what kind of a ball do you mean, then?"

"We mean a baseball," said one.

"Suppose I take a baseball, then, and tie it to some long cotton streamers six feet long, could I still throw the ball over the house?"

"Yes."

"All right. So we agree that we can throw a baseball, with the ribbons streaming out behind it like a rocket, over the house. The streamers make it look more bulky but they do not prevent its being thrown with precision and accuracy and power. It can ascend high into the air, turn gracefully, and without getting tangled up in the streamers, come down again. Why? Because, in spite of its great length of flying bunting, its weight and power are centered in one place.

"Now I am going to ask you to convert yourselves from the big awkward pushballs that you are now, six feet tall, into little compressed baseballs. The center of that ball is to be the center of your chest and back about eight inches below your neck, in other words the exact center of your torso. All the rest of yourself, your awkward, dangling hands and legs, yes, even those protuberances called heads, are to be only so many dangling ribbons or streamers following along behind.

"You are literally to pick yourselves up next Saturday, taking a firm grip upon that central core of yourself, and literally throw yourself at the man you want to block, or the runner you want to tackle. When it comes to winning games that is more important than merely throwing yourselves over houses. But if it is necessary to jump over a house to win this game, how many of you will be willing to try?"

All shouted, "We all will!"

"But how are we going to find this central self — this core and kernel of ourselves?" asked one. "Who is going to introduce us to this star performer that we have kept out of sight all these years?"

"Yes, to find this 'fellow' is your problem right now," re-

plied the coach. "Indeed, your very success or failure depends upon how soon you will be able to find him.

"I propose that you start on a little journey of exploration right now to find him: Drop on the ground on your side in perfect relaxation. Lie there in perfect repose for a few minutes. Now lift an arm, now a leg and let them drop to make sure that the ground is holding you and you are not holding the ground. Then roll over and stretch very slowly. The only spot that has any power is your torso; tense this as you move your weight and stretch the muscles of the trunk, but let the arms and legs trail along behind as lifeless and useless as though they were mere seaweed. Pay no attention to them except to recognize that they don't exist. Forget that you ever had any limbs. Keep at this relaxing exercise till you feel free of arms and legs."

He watched the group a few minutes. "Good," he exclaimed. "Now stand erect and let the head slump forward on the neck; droop your shoulders and bend your knees—gradually—shutting up like a jackknife or like a slowly closing leaf. Let the arms hang loose at your sides as though they were rags, head hanging limp. Then gradually straighten up as though a string were fastened between your shoulder blades, pulling you. Find the pivot back there around which your whole force centers. Then sway slightly from this center, as in throwing the discus, always remembering that your center of equilibrium is in the center between your shoulders. Shake one leg until perfectly limp and relaxed in every joint. Then the other leg. Then stretch and flex the toes and feel the life swinging through the foot. Then bounce up and down on your feet as though they were bouncing balls made of rubber. Be sure you are all rhythmic, all relaxed, all alive.

"Now are you ready to throw yourself into the game next Saturday as you never did before?" he concluded.

"You bet we are!" all cried.

*And when Saturday came, we won the game.

*All the events narrated in this chapter actually happened, but in slightly different sequence than recorded here.

II.

Next week saw a still harder ordeal ahead for us.

"I guess if we had to jump over a house last Saturday," one player reported to the coach, "then this Saturday we shall have to go through a stone wall."

"All right," said the coach, "let us go through a stone wall."

But little did he know at that time how this miracle was going to be brought about. It came in a very roundabout and unexpected way.

A boy came to his room one morning and asked if he could have a little of his time.

"What is on your mind?"

The boy hesitated. He started to speak, stopped, and then suddenly went ahead.

"There is lots on my mind, coach. There is something on my heart, too. It may be even deeper than that," again he hesitated. "At any rate it is something down so deep, I don't know if I can express it."

"It is down so deep I suppose," said the coach, smiling, "that it is like breaking through a stone wall to get it out."

"Yes," the boy responded, "that's it."

"Take your time," said the coach. "This sounds interesting."

"You see it's this way," went on the boy. "You helped us last week to get some tensions out of our bodies. I had hardly accomplished that before I ran up against some other tensions down deep in my heart and soul. There is a fine bunch of fellows on this team and I want to be worthy of them. I don't see how I can be worthy of them until I get rid of some of these tensions in my soul. I don't feel I can play my best game till I get right inside."

"So there is something you want to get rid of — some, er, ballast, eh?"

"Exactly. That is it."

"Well," said the coach slowly, "I wonder if you realize that

most of what is bad in this world is only something good in the wrong place."

"I don't understand," said the other.

"Well, let us take for example garbage that they feed to chickens and pigs. Garbage is all right in the garbage can, still better in the trough where the pigs and chickens can eat it. But it is in the wrong place if you keep it in the kitchen."

"That is true," said the boy.

"Suppose a selfish woman is so jealous of her neighbor who owns the pigs that she won't put the garbage in the trough where they can get it, and so she conceals it in a big can in the kitchen. Pretty soon that can is filled and she has to buy another, and then another and another till the whole kitchen is filled with garbage cans. That would be bad wouldn't it?"

"You are sure telling me," exclaimed the boy.

"In the same way, suppose you have a lot of energy and you keep it shut in for your own selfish uses, it becomes cruelty doesn't it? And thrift shut in for your own self becomes covetousness; love used for selfish gratification becomes lust; self-confidence that eats in on itself becomes arrogance, and so on. Do you get me?"

"I sure do. But how can a fellow get rid of some of those things? How can we empty out the garbage?"

The coach looked around. His eye fell on the closed window.

"I'll tell you," he said rising, "to make the thing very simple—very simple and easy, suppose you hand me these things you have shut up in yourself and let me just toss them out the window."

"I'll be only too glad to." It was like a sigh.

"Sweep the old barn out into the garden," said the coach as he threw wide the window, "and let the Good Gardener convert it all to His use and service." He paused and looked out a few minutes then added, "There, it is all gone," and he slammed down the window. He went back to the boy.

"I am not sure whether you caught all I was driving at," he remarked.

The boy seized his hand and said with feeling, "I am sure that I did, coach. Thanks an awful lot." And he vanished away.

That Saturday that boy was like a man inspired. His feet were like wings. The score was large on both sides, but when it was all over, this boy alone had scored more than the other entire team.

The men gathered around him in a group in the locker room.

"How did you do it, Roy?" one of them asked.

Roy turned to them, "Well, fellows, did you ever hear of a bicycle making good time that had sand in the bearings? Neither can men travel fast in a dust storm. But I want to tell you fellows, that dust and sand in the eyes and mouth is nothing compared to what I had resting like lead inside my mind and spirit. Take it from me, boys, if you want to go fast and far throw out the ballast. If you want to go through a stone wall, travel light!"

III.

Several weeks went by and there approached the game with the best team in the conference.

"We will have to jump over houses and go through stone walls and then won't get to first base with this team," was the general feeling of the campus. Then one day the captain of the team took all the men into the coach's room. "Before we play St. George tonight under the arc lights with everyone expecting us to lose by a 40 to 0 score, we want you to tell us something that will steady us."

The coach went over to the electric light and although it was broad daylight he pressed the button and the light flashed on.

"See this light, how easily it was turned on? No effort on my part, save the mere pushing of a button." They nodded.

"If you look into the wiring inside you will find there is a break in the connection at one point. The pressing of the button closes that break. Now, fellows, if there is any break in your connection, if there is any fellow who hates another on the squad, if there is antagonism or selfishness, cut it out right now; that turns off the switch. If there is anyone who has an inordinate desire to outshine all his fellows among you, that causes another break. My wish is that each of you fellows tonight will press yourself into the connection." He paused a minute, "If any one of you has contact with the source of the power way up there in the hills, all the better. Then there may be infinite power released in the game tonight."

He paused again. "This is a very real thing I am talking about, fellows. There is a legend that once the Governor of Minnesota wanted to send a telephone call to Duluth at a certain hour for dedication of some important thing. A storm came up and carried down some of the telephone lines. A Scandinavian lineman of tremendous physique was sent out to mend the break. He found that the storm had brought down the line at one point and some farmer or trapper had cut away a strand of wire so that he could not join the ends. Knowing the governor's appointment was important, he finally took hold of each end of the wire and let the message be sent through him. The shock was great, but he could stand it. Now, fellows, each of you is to be like that Scandinavian. You are to press yourselves each into his place, and let the circuit be complete. Have you team spirit enough? Are you humble enough? Can you stand it? Do you get what I mean?"

They nodded.

"Then go to your rooms and connect up with the power house, each in his own way. But, fellows, don't pray to win, pray rather that you will all be instruments like that wire to carry whatever strength the team may need."

After a pause he said, "Did you hear of the contest between the great steam engine locomotive and the little electric engine? It went like this . . . A contest was once arranged to test the relative power of the giant locomotive and the little electrically driven motor car. The great powerful locomotive had been fired up for an hour before the contest began. The smoke was puffing from its smokestack and the great driving piston was ready to send the powerful wheels plunging into action against its little opponent. At the signal the two opponents clashed against each other, the little motor silently, the great locomotive with a great roar and puffing of smoke. For a few minutes everything was at a deadlock, and then gradually the little motor began to push its giant adversary backwards. For a while the old engineer in the locomotive cab stared in amazement. Then he looked out of the window and shook his fist at the motor and cried out: 'We could whip you, you little rascal, but we can't beat the power up there in the hills.'"

Never in the history of the school did a team play as these boys played that night.

IV.

Now that the last game of the season was over, and nothing was left but to celebrate the championship that had been so gloriously won, seven of the men came to the coach and said:

"We fellows were talking over the season last night and all agreed that we had gotten something out of the game this year that was worth more than merely football stuff. We seven are going to graduate next year and may never have a chance to play the dear old game again. But there is something we got out there on the field that we would like to carry with us into all our other walks of life. Could you tell us how we can do it?"

"I'll tell you what I will do," replied the coach, "I will take you to a man who used to play the game, and who has now made a wonderful success of his life. Perhaps he can tell you what

he considers the most precious 'carry-over' his football playing has brought into his game of life."

So in a few days the boys were invited into the coach's room to meet a stranger, a man whom they had often seen on the bleachers watching their game, but one whom none of them had ever met.

"This man," said the coach, "is a very busy man, and his work takes him all over the country. We should consider ourselves honored to have a little of his valuable time. I have asked him to tell you what things of value he gleaned from football."

The man, tall, slender, with powerful shoulders, smiled at the men and said quickly: "The four things I carried over into my work from football have been *Wholeness, Teamwork, Rhythm, and Faith*.

"There is no game ever devised by man that brings out the *Whole Man* as completely as does football. From the days of marbles and tops a boy's life is one long pilgrimage to find a game that will call forth all his powers of mind and body in the largest way. He tires of checkers and chess, which put the legs to sleep while they excite the head. He tires, too, of such simple things as marbles and bicycles, which are easily learned and soon cease to be a stimulus to any mental effort. His attention is early drawn to the great games of America—tennis, golf, baseball, track and football. If he is a healthy boy of moderate strength, and if he gives fair trial to them all, nine cases out of ten he selects football as his favorite game. And the reason is simply this: Football does not demand instruments to come between the player and his art; only the man, and the whole man is required. When a play is in action in football a man cannot reach out a hand with a racket or bat and make the play demanded; he cannot stoop down and scoop up a 'grounded' with his two hands and stop the play; he must throw his whole body at the play, head and shoulders, arms and legs, and with such precision that the hole in the line is closed up, or the enemy's formation broken at its head, or the runner

with the ball 'nailed.' The human body is the smallest unit that football deals with. The glory of being completely in action from the smallest brain cell to the tip of the littlest finger is a sensation not soon to be forgotten. Men do not insist on playing football merely from a sense of duty or from devotion to their Alma Mater; they play it because they want to.

"In the second place he discovers that this wholeness with which he participates in this game is not a wholeness that is limited to himself alone. Not only does football awaken a consciousness of a man's own wholeness as no other game ever awakens it, but it also awakens him to the fact that no man is a whole entirely unto himself. Man is only complete insofar as he merges and loses himself in a still greater whole. Perfect wholeness does not exist until one finds his place in perfect co-ordination and correlation with the larger *Whole* of which he is a part.

"Football demands a clear-cut quality of complete immersion in the group consciousness equalled by no other game ever invented and participated in by man in the entire history of sport. With the exception of the one particular man singled out to carry the ball for each particular play, every player knows that only as he loses his own individuality will the individuality of his team stand forth, only as he loses his life will he find it in the larger triumph of the team. Humility, selflessness, the power to identify one's self with others and immerse one's self in the *Whole*, are the great virtues, par excellence, of football.

"In the third place, football demands a *rhythm*—a different type of rhythm than the rhythm of the hurdler and the high jumper—a rhythm that grows out of this very losing of one's self in the group. Instead of each man being a little poem in himself, the entire team, taken as a whole, through its mutual co-operation and coordination, makes a big epic poem. An athlete running a race on the track is a solo, a football team in action is an orchestra. If the track athlete cannot find the right rhythm or strike the right note his performance is not a success; if the

football player cannot enter into the physical, mental and spiritual orchestration of his teammates, his performance will not be a success. As the trackman is a lyric poem, all to himself, the football team, functioning as a unit, is a drama. Instead of the tripping verse of Shelley we have the mighty line of Marlowe. A great football team making a great football play, carrying out a great program of offensive strategy, is a living drama, not a written drama; and living men are always greater than living words.

"There is something in the rhythm and style of a line into which men are slipping into place on the run that is not to be found in a line of dramatic poetry where words are the units of expression! To sift one's self through a mass of men, dodging the interference and picking out the man with the ball is analysis incarnate. It is mind turned into body or rather, body turned into mind. It takes a man with a superior analytical mind to make a great defensive player on a football team. For exactly the same reason, it requires a superior synthetical mind to build up a powerful and adequate attack. Moreover there is a bit of dash and color to the kind of synthesis that can build up a formation on the run. But football can be made a very sordid and brutal game and we can miss all its beauty and grandeur unless we look upon it as a window through which the great universal, spiritual forces of the universe may find adequate, wholesome and glorious expression in the hearts and minds of the boys and men who participate in it.

"In the fourth place this rhythm which football makes use of does not end with the rhythmic motions of one little man and even of one little team. When it is most powerful this rhythm reveals itself as a part of the great universal rhythm of which we all know so little. Indeed, football often places a man on a vast, wind-swept horizon above which the little individual is silhouetted in all his helplessness, weakness and incompleteness. Such a background furnishes an ideal moment for a man to seek after God lest happily he may find Him. It is not a time to pray for success,

neither is it a time to pray to do one's best—prayers of such kind are often futile and worthless. It may not be even a time for prayer at all—in the commonly accepted meaning of the term. *But It Certainly Is A Time For A Man To Acknowledge His Union With His Maker And Lean Back Upon The Power That Such Union Can Give Him. It Is Certainly A Time When A Man Should Throw Off, If He Can, All The Unnecessary Debris And Impedimenta Of Fears, Angers, Prejudices, Meannesses, Envyies And Discords That He Can And Make Of Himself As Clear A Channel As Possible For Passing On The Power And Glory Of God.*

"For this is one of the times in a young man's life when he should say, if he knows how: 'Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty.'

"To sum it up, fellows, I would say there are four elements necessary for success. When you let your wholeness go outside of yourself, it becomes teamwork; when you let your rhythm go outside yourself it becomes faith. Wholeness, teamwork, rhythm and faith—these four form a strange mixture you may say, but take it from me, boys, they have carried me to all the success I ever have attained, and I doubt whether any lasting success was ever achieved by anyone, no matter how great, that was not based upon these things one can learn in the game of football."

Chapter 2

POWER OF THE GREAT ATHLETES

ALL GREAT ATHLETES AGREE THAT THERE ARE TWO fundamental things essential for an athlete to be at his best: One is to throw out the ballast, the other is to tune in to the source of power. While the point of emphasis may be different in different cases, the fundamentals are always the same. One great athlete may emphasize casting out the physical ballast, such as smoking and drinking, while another emphasizes casting out mental ballast, such as fear and hatred. One athlete may stress tuning in to one's fellow team mates in the spirit of harmony and good will, while another will stress tuning in to God and the infinite.

I.

A. Casting Ballast Out of the Body*

Ed Walsh of the White Sox, who won forty games and lost twelve in 1908, and struck out two hundred and sixty-nine men in 1908, and later coached Notre Dame and the White Sox, says:

"Life is faster now than I have ever seen it. The average boy has more temptations to face, a harder fight to live right, than he did when I was a boy. The hip flask at social events, pro-

*I am indebted to my friend James T. Hardwick and to George D. Small for much of the material on the following pages.

fanity and looseness in general are common. I see everywhere the characters of boys being undermined by dissipation. The boy who would make good at anything today must say no to the many suggestions that come to him to live this kind of life."

Archie Campbell, leading pitcher in the American Association in 1929, says:

"Since I was a boy two men in baseball have stood out before me as idols. One of these men I later found out drank whiskey. Since then I have had no use for him. I have no use for whiskey or admiration for anyone who drinks it. The other man is Walter Johnson. I regard him as not only the greatest baseball pitcher of all times, but as a wonderful example of towering manhood.

"I work in the movies in the winter and baseball in the summer. I can see in both of these professions the havoc wrought by whiskey, cigarettes, loose sex life and other forms of immoral living. I want to keep as far from any of them as possible. I can almost always spot a man who drinks in the rugged competition of baseball."

Another great baseball player, probably the greatest first baseman in the history of the game, Louis Gehrig of the New York Yankees, says:

"Smoking has a harmful influence upon a growing boy. No boy under twenty years old has any business smoking. As to drinking, because most men do not know how to drink sanely, the best way out is not to drink at all."

The Captain of the Yale football team, W. W. Green, all-American guard in 1928, says:

"I am convinced that any athlete who wishes to rise above mediocrity must push such vices as loose sex life, dishonesty and dirty athletics completely out of his mind. To be a success in any line of athletics you have to play square both with yourself and the coaches. The most complete satisfaction that I have comes to me through helping those who are not quite so fortunate as I am by playing and living clean in order to set an example."

Harry J. Hardwick, all-American end in 1926, says:

"Dissipation in any form has no place in the life of an athlete. Take a good look at successful athletes you have known and see which one has lasted the longer, the one who dissipates or the one who does not. I have never smoked and believe I never shall, simply because at the start of my athletic career I was thrown with men who smoked a great deal and the sights that these men offered at the end of the first few days of practice cured me for good."

Wesley Fesler of Ohio State, all-American football player in 1928, says:

"I have seen much of the bad effects from unclean living, both on my high school teams and in college. Fellows who in their first year of participation were world beaters, followed this type of life and it beat them badly in their following years. My idea of this kind of life is that it is the worst possible kind to live. The farther a boy can stay away from it, the better; also the farther one stays away from a fellow who follows this kind of life, the better."

Charley Paddock, "fastest human" of his time, says:

"I think smoking is very harmful, especially upon boys who are not yet 21 years old. I regard it as even more harmful than drinking. Sometimes men with inconceivably strong bodies have dissipated a lot and apparently gotten by with what weaker men could not stand at all and created the wrong conception. The worst form of dissipation is lack of sleep, irregular sleep, and the wrong kind of eating."

Connie Mack, when asked the secret of his wonderful team that won the world's championships of 1910, 1911 and 1913, said:

"There is very little smoking among our boys. We find that those players who smoke never amount to a great deal. Players who should otherwise have continued in the game until the age of thirty have had to get out years before their time as the poison of cigarettes, getting into their systems, has unnerved

and weakened them so that they were utterly unfit for the duty they had to perform. No boy or man can expect to succeed in this world to a high position and continue the use of cigarettes."

The star batter of this team, "Home-Run Baker," said:

"I never drink nor smoke. If any youngster wants advice from one who does not mean to preach, here it is: Leave cigarettes and tobacco alone and don't touch 'booze' now or at any time. Mine is the total abstinence platform for both liquor and tobacco."

Governor John K. Tenor, of Pennsylvania, later president of the National Baseball League, said of Mack and his world-champion club:

"His success is largely due to the fact that he can put into the field a team of nine men who have never tasted liquor. Of that wonderful infield of his, none ever tasted liquor, and but one ever used tobacco."

B. Casting Ballast Out of the Mind

Farmer Burns was for years the champion middleweight wrestler of the world. Even after he was fifty years of age no one could throw him. After a match when he had thrown a particularly difficult opponent, he stepped to the ropes and spoke to the men and boys: "Perhaps you fellows wonder how a man of fifty can throw these young fellows. I will tell you my secret of success. I don't smoke, drink, nor swear."

"What does swearing have to do with it?" called a spectator.

"Did you ever see a man swear when he is walking happily down the street and everything is going well with him? But if he steps on a banana peel and slips down, or if a brick falls from the roof and knocks him down, you may hear him swear. In other words, a man never swears unless he is down. It is only the underdog who swears. A swearing man is either down or on his way down. Therefore if a fellow starts swearing before a game, he is licked before he starts. Why handicap yourself by being the underdog to start with? If you want to be a winner, fellows, cut out the swearing."

Charles P. Taft, son of ex-President Taft, member of the football, basketball and track teams of Yale, and all-American guard and captain of the champion basketball team of 1917, says:

"Athletics teach you to live clean. After you go to work you have to live clean if you want to be worth five cents to yourself or anybody else. But far above that is the satisfaction that you find first in athletics and then in every branch of living when you can make of your mind a keen instrument of service and of your body a temple for the spirit of God."

Bill Ingram, member of the champion rowing crew of Naval Academy, 1917, leading scorer in American colleges in football in 1917, famous coach, says:

"I can always sense when we are not getting everything out of a team which we should get. When I dig down into it, I almost always find the trouble to be mental, moral or spiritual in the broader sense. I am opposed to any kind of this dissipation. The most serious dissipation is mental. I mean by that, worry, jealousy, laziness, fear and the lack of a cooperative spirit."

Seraphim Post of Stanford, unanimous choice for all-American football team in 1928, says:

"Anger, dishonesty and dirty athletics tend to prevent a close spirit of cooperation with one's team mates, and materially handicaps one in attaining the position he desires. When a fellow begins this type of play he is usually through. He never attempts to perfect his play from then on."

Dan E. McGugin, member of the famous "point a minute team" of Michigan (1901-3) which scored 550 points in 11 games and who coached Vanderbilt for 25 years, winning 138 games, to 33 lost and 11 tied, says:

"On the football field we work with head, heart, hands and hoofs—the four H's, as somebody has said. In order of their importance we would put the heart first, the head second, the feet third and the hands fourth; and without the heart all the rest are 'as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.' Now, by these heart qualities we mean, among others, courage, patience, loyalty,

enthusiasm, willingness to undergo drudgery, high spirit, clean—absolutely clean—living. These are things which are most useful in any walk of life and are the things which are most contributive to living abundantly.”

II.

A. Tune in to Your Team Mates (Friendship)

Knute Rockne stated many times when asked what was the outstanding characteristic of his famous team of the four horsemen in the backfield and the seven mules in the line, that it was the spirit of friendship among the fellows. There wasn't a man on the team that didn't love every other man on the team. The ability to build this spirit of friendship and esprit de corps is the great secret of Crisler and Bierman and most of the truly great coaches. Bill Ingram who coached Pacific Fleet team, William and Mary, Indiana, and Naval Academy, states:

“It is impossible to have a football team out of a group of men who are not friendly to each other. Unless every man on my team is hurt in his heart when one member fails, there is something wrong with the spirit of the team. The most important phase of my work sums itself up in the term, 'Friendship.' Leading my men to have a friendly attitude toward each other, I feel as close to the members of my football teams as I do to my own family. I hold something of the same regard for both. As the years go by, one in my position has such men all over the world who have played under him and whose achievements he watches with the greatest interest and pride. This interest, combined with the assurance that these men reciprocate this feeling, is one of the things which makes life most worth living.”

George Sisler, St. Louis and Boston star baseball player who holds the major league record for total number of hits (256) and who for two years led the American League in batting and in stolen bases, whose batting record for 41 games was .420, says:

“I regard an attitude of unselfishness as being a very important factor in a real baseball team. A group of ordinary baseball players have no limit beyond which they might go if they absolutely loved each other enough. This quality in life is a part of religion. I regard religion as being everything in life.”

B. Tune in to God (Prayer)

In 1896 under the direction of King George of Greece the Olympic games were revived, and with them was revived that most dramatic, thrilling and romantic event of all athletic history—the Marathon race. Up among the hills of Thessaly lived a poor shepherd, who had never heard of athletic sports. When he heard of the coming contest, his Greek heart was stirred with patriotism, and he started training for the Marathon race. The three days before the contest he spent in fasting and prayer. When the day of the contest arrived he thrilled the world by his spectacular victory. How much had his prayer helped him?

In 1912, Clarence DeMar, at the age of 22, won the American Marathon race. Ten years later, in 1922, at the age of 32, he attempted what other athletes have often attempted and failed to accomplish—a comeback. Knowing the task before him, he prayed as he ran. When ten miles from the finish his strength began to give out and every step became a torture. Then suddenly a power seemed to press against him from behind, his steps grew lighter, and with comparative ease he ran home a winner. Since then he has won the Marathon contest year after year, and stands forth as America's greatest Marathoner of modern times.

Garbisch, all-American center, and captain of the West Point football team in 1923, never entered a contest without prayer. The Northwestern football team of several years ago that tied for the Big Ten championship was a praying team. So was the Center College team that defeated Harvard.

In 1907 I saw the greatest Carlisle Indian team that was ever turned out. Glenn Warner was the coach, the famous Mt. Pleasant was quarterback. I saw them defeat Harvard

22-0. In the middle of the second half, just before Harvard kicked off to the Indians after one of the hard fought touchdowns, I looked at Mt. Pleasant standing under the goal posts. I saw a strange sight. He was standing there, one of the handsomest figures I ever saw, his head thrown back, eyes shut, face up toward the sky. He stated afterwards that he was praying that the ball would come to him. It did, and dodging the first three tacklers, he encircled the entire Harvard team for one of the most wonderful runs for touchdown in the history of the game.

At the National High School Track and Field Meet of 1931 the twelve winners of first places were asked the question, "Should athletes pray?" Eight of these came back with a strong "Yes." This proportion is about the proportion I have found to be true in the average athletic team, that is to say, three-fourths of every team believe in the value of prayer.

Jimmy Owen, sixteen-year-old Maplewood, Missouri, national champion in the hundred-yard dash, said, "Yes, I pray before the start of my races, as it gives me confidence in myself and helps me feel all the good that can come to me."

Vincent Murphy of Cathedral Latin High School, Cleveland, Ohio, the new national high-jump king, said, "Yes, I always pray before my events, because if God is with you, you can do anything." Vincent made a leap of six feet and one-half inches at the Chicago meet.

Robert M. Kennicott, the "main spring" in Main Township's two-man track team that carried off first place in the meet with a total of thirty-one points, said, "I pray before every meet, mainly for the benefit of my school and my team. It gives me more strength." Bob was the winner of the 220-yard dash, which he made in twenty-two and one-tenth seconds.

J. C. Petty, the newly crowned discus champion, hails from Kaufman, Texas. J. C. is not only a high school star, but he has a mark of better than 154 feet in his event, which makes him one of the best in the entire country, including the college stars. J. C. said, "Every night before a meet I always

pray that I may win. I also pray for the boys who compete against me, that they may do better than ever before."

Amsden Olivet, the elongated Negro star from Roosevelt High School of Dayton, Ohio, who set a new world's record in the 220-yard low hurdles and also won a first in the high hurdles event, said, "I pray to perfect my defects." Amsden's new world's intercollegiate record is twenty-three and one-tenth seconds. He was the only man in the meet to win two firsts.

The last of these high school champions to express his faith in prayer is Doyme Hunnicutt of Cotton Plant, Arkansas. Doyme is undoubtedly one of the greatest high school broad jumpers that the world has ever known. His mark of twenty-three feet, eight and one-half inches, came within a few inches of the world's high school mark. Doyme said, "My mother has always taught me to pray before any great undertaking. She always told me not to pray to win, however, but to pray I might be given strength to do my very best. I always know that she prays for me in the same way."

All-American Guard Green says, "To me religion has a great appeal. I like the complete satisfaction it gives, and I think the men at college who lose the religious contact have lost a part of education."

Pommerening, all-American tackle (Michigan, 1928), says "Religion must necessarily be the most important driving force in anyone's life."

All-American Post says, "Religion is after a man's own choosing—everybody differs with their fellows. But most everyone includes in his creed the requisites of a noble character. From this point of view it is a driving force in life."

The great champion pitcher, Campbell, says, "The following quotation which my wife taught me has been a source of strength to me: 'Divine Spirit fills my mind and affairs. I rejoice in abundance to meet my every need.'"

All-American Wesley E. Fesler says, "Religion, in my mind, is a great factor in one's life. Without a religious training, one's

morals cannot be so good, because one really cannot see the wrong in the things he does. Just for this one thing I value a religious training very much."

Charley Paddock says, "As to religion, I feel myself surrounded by some sort of omnipotent power. Unless my feeling is right, I don't see how the universe is to be explained."

III.

One instance, chosen from many, that well illustrates all the principles stressed in this chapter, is the following:

Several years ago the athletic world was startled by the marvelous feats of Red Grange in making four touchdowns in twelve minutes against the University of Michigan. The same year the University of Minnesota had lost most of its games against institutions that were not considered the strongest. When Illinois came to play Minnesota everyone naturally expected a score of 40 to 0 in favor of Illinois. Instead the game ended 27 to 7 in favor of Minnesota. Very few people know the inner secret of that victory. Let me reveal it to you.

The Thursday evening before the game the Minnesota team met at the home of one of the players and determined to bury all their petty jealousies, discords and rivalries. The team happened to be split wide open at the time from jealousies between national fraternities. They tossed overboard all the useless ballast they had been carrying through the early season's games. Just before the meeting broke up, one of the men said, "Fellows, we have tried everything else so far, suppose we try prayer," and then he haltingly led them in a short prayer. With the useless ballast all safely thrown overboard and the seal of permanence put upon the act through a simple act of prayer, they entered the game the next Saturday a completely new team.

No wonder they *traveled far and fast* that day . . . for they were *traveling light*. No wonder there was power and triumph in their playing . . . for they had *tuned in*.

POWER ON THE CINDER PATH

IN 1913 I ORGANIZED THE FIRST STATE INTERCOLLEGIATE Track and Field Meet in the state of Minnesota. Fourteen years later when I withdrew from track coaching I had rounded out the longest period of continuous service of any track coach in the state of Minnesota. Having continued my athletic duties until I had attained the unique title of dean of all the coaches of the state, naturally gave rise to this question: What was the charm that so long held a man whose primary interest in life was in creative writing, poetry and religion to the active pursuit of training men how to run and jump on the cinder path?

1. *Complete Sincerity*. My first reason for liking track athletics is because it brought me into more real contact with men than the average classroom allows. I say real contact because it is such sincere contact. While there may be some insincerity in a classroom there can never be any insincerity on an athletic field. There a man has to put his whole self into every event. In a field meet a man cannot sit on a chair and let his tongue do most of the work as he can in an English class. Every part of himself from the smallest brain cell to the tip of the tiniest finger is here brought into action. To me the athletic field has been a laboratory of life

Our contacts in the classroom are too often partial and half-baked contacts, while on the athletic field we learn to know the whole man. When a man comes to take off his cumbersome, conventional street clothes he so often takes off his petty hypocrisies, inhibitions and unnaturalnesses and when he steps into a light, trim track costume he steps into his true, genuine, spontaneous and natural self. At any rate as I look back over my twenty years of experience on the athletic field as coach I recall many men, who, when they changed their suits in the locker room at the same time "put off the old man and put on the new."

II. Self-Control. In the second place I like track athletics because it demands a more strenuous code of training than any other form of activities yet known to man. The pipe and the cigarette often find their way into the mouth of the baseball player or golf player—into the mouth of a track man—never. While even in the other sports the man who would keep himself fit over a long period of years, as did Christy Matheson and Walter Johnson and Hans Wagner, all men of abstemious habits, men who knew how to say No to many things that would tempt the man of weaker will, yet it is true that no athlete competing in baseball and tennis and golf has submitted himself to such careful diet and training as has been a part of the life of such men as Nurmi, Paddock and Osborn.

Very rarely have I ever had a man who smoked on my track teams. I have been very willing to accept them—if they could produce the goods, but they very rarely could produce the goods. In my twenty years of experience I can recall only three men who smoked who ever succeeded in winning any races for me in track. And these men, of course, always quit their smoking absolutely during the training season. All three of these men were inveterate smokers out of season, and the effort that was required of them to rise above this habit for three long months was nothing short of heroic. I admired them

from the bottom of my heart. All the heroism of the athletic field is not displayed at the time of the contests!

I regret to say that the pipe bowls of this age have become what the flesh pots of Egypt were to a former age—a symbol of the easy temptations that we cast before our rising youth. I consider it one of the minor menaces to our modern civilization. The simplest way to combat it would be to give nation-wide publicity to the habits and training rules of our great track athletes and let them become models and inspirations to the youth of the country. Women who think an occasional cigarette has no effect upon their qualifications for motherhood should learn what a deleterious effect such occasional indulgence has upon the young man's qualification for success in track athletics. Perhaps I am a bit old-fashioned in my viewpoint here, but I have seen too often the ravages of the tobacco habit among boys of adolescent years to speak upon the subject with indifference.

Yes, there is a price nations and individuals must pay, if they wish to excel in track athletics. A track man must submit to a rigorous course of training for two or three months before he can think of competing in public. And then he may not make the team! Some men have trained faithfully for four years for the opportunity to compete in one race which actually took less than ten seconds to run. Training four years for ten seconds! Is it worth it? But do not all of us spend a lifetime training ourselves to be prepared to make decisions which may actually take us less than ten seconds to make? Many of the world's greatest decisions have been made in less than ten seconds flat. Men have been elected to the presidency of great corporations because they were able to make decisions in nine and three-fifths seconds where it took other men ten and one-fifth. The power, attained only through a long process of self-denial, faithful training and arduous endeavor to bring all of one's power of mind, soul and body into nine and three-fifths seconds of concentration often measures the difference between mediocrity and greatness.

III. Master of One Thing. And this leads me to my third reason for liking track athletics and that is that in order to make a track team a man must be able to do at least one thing well. This is more than can be said of the average business man, college student or church member.

In order to get into a college and in order to graduate out from a college a man must be able to "pass." If he is clever about it he may in some things be able to "get by." There is no "getting by" in a track team. He either gets there or he doesn't. He either is good enough in his event to make the team or he doesn't make the team. And there is no guesswork about it. It is all determined by mathematical accuracy. The finest instruments known to man for measuring to the tenth of an inch—the stop watch and the steel tape—are the instruments used to determine it.

How many people who pray out loud in church and Sunday school and prayer meeting might make more efficient prayers if a stop watch were held on them! How much of the superficial thinking of our modern college youth might be improved if a steel tape could be applied to it. What a changed world we would live in if in our business organizations and churches every member could do at least one thing well!

And how do track athletes attain unto this ideal of efficiency? They sacrifice, labor and pray. For, above all things, they find they need a tremendous zeal, enthusiasm and faith. Indeed all the other reasons that I shall give in this article for liking track athletics contribute more or less to the achieving of this practical ideal of efficiency.

IV. Team Spirit. In the fourth place I like track athletics because it brings into expression one of the rarest and perhaps one of the highest types of team spirit known. This spirit, when properly developed and experienced can become one of the most valuable assets an athlete can carry with him into all the later experiences of his life. The team play

of track athletics, however, is far different from the team play of baseball or basketball or football. In the last three the teams come onto the field marching as a body, they play all together, every movement on the field is as it were in unison, and when the game is over all march off the field together. It is comparatively easy to develop and foster an esprit de corps in teams playing under such conditions as these.

But with the track team all is different. The men make their appearances by twos and threes, participate in their events and then retire while other men take their places. With the exception of the relay races every event is an individual affair rather than a team affair. In football the unifying centripetal forces are actively in evidence to help the coach; in track work the separating, centrifugal forces are constantly operating to impede him in this purpose.

I had played football and had felt the sheer joy of losing myself in the team; I knew it could be done. I knew it was much harder to do in track. Its very difficulties challenged me, drew me, and I won.

I found first of all that there was only one way to do it and that was by creating an atmosphere through the personalities whom the boys admired. First of all the responsibility of creating such an atmosphere must rest upon the personality of the coach; second, upon the captain; third, upon the upper-classmen or the born leaders among the group.

A spirit of loyalty to the larger whole and the subordination of personal conceit and vanity was something that could not be taught—it had to be caught. Therefore I set out from the beginning to make unselfishness and loyalty for others contagious. I began by loving my boys—which was not a hard thing to do. They retaliated by loving me. I usually gathered the group together at the beginning of the season for a short talk in which I stressed more the spirit necessary for true success than the physical phases of training. But after that one talk I rarely tried to reach my men en masse. I got at them individual-

ly. When I saw a man getting too self-conscious, whether through self-conceit, or self-depreciation, I drew him aside and had a little talk with him. Thus, as the year progressed, by putting in a word here and there, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little, a great fabric of beautiful team work was erected which in later life will probably prove the most valuable asset my track boys will carry away from the years of training and sacrifice they gave to the athletic teams I coached.

Some years this spirit seemed almost too much in evidence. Boys were vying in slowing down in their races and letting weaker comrades pass them. Sometimes this led to winning of letters by men who hardly deserved them. Once we lost a race to another team by reason of the desire of a man to let another team mate win it. But where we lost once we won a hundred times through this spirit—and by its sheer force it carried my men to victories sometimes that seemed beforehand impossible to have won. Indeed we could almost have taken the principle, "Love One Another" as our motto and placed below it the insignia, "By this sign we conquer."

V. *Sense of Rhythm.* In the fifth place I love track athletics because I am—like nearly all human beings if they only knew it—a poet, and athletics give me an opportunity for expression for my love of poetry.

There is rhythm in music, rhythm in lines of verse, rhythm in lines of architecture, sculpture and painting. But greater than any rhythm of any man-created things is the rhythm in the lines of a moving body. To me a correctly performed hurdle race is a poem. Four steps between each hurdle with the accent on the fourth! And how important it is that the athlete gets that accent right! Critics may be very severe and demanding nowadays for writers of poetry, but it is far easier to satisfy them with an "almost good enough" than it is to satisfy the demands of the race course. There are many *almost* perfect

poems in a bound volume of Tennyson, or Poe or Whittier or Holmes. No almost good enough poems are recorded in a hurdle race. They must be perfect poems—no more, no less.

The Cry of the High Hurdlers

"With bodies bowed, with breath drawn in,
We're waiting for the sound;
Our hot hearts shake, the start to make
And leave the clinging ground.
The pistol cracks; we burst our bounds,
We're working arms and feet;
Our heads go back as on the track
We stretch—fresh racers fleet.
The hurdles lift their menace high
Like walls to break our flight;
We mount the air, a hidden stair,
And shoot their easy height.
And now we feel the final pull
A triple struggle hot;
We catch the cries, we feel the eyes,
We 'hit her up,' a jot.
We spurt as one, we rise abreast,
Like horses o'er a hedge;
We hear the cry: 'A tie! A tie!'
We'll drink to each a pledge!
We're coming, coming, coming, like the old
Olympics fleet,
For we've sworn to smash the record in
the race.
And we're leaping, leaping, leaping, like the
hunter in a chase;
And we spurn the heavy ground with
flashing feet."

I began each year by teaching my boys how to get the proper rhythm between their periods of exercise and their periods

of rest, how to gauge the rhythm of the broad jump, how to time the pull up in the pole vault. Even running must not be on a hard, even, level basis—it must be all full of rhythms, cadences, harmonies. All must be done in symmetry and harmony and balance. Watch the high jumper:

“He slowly paced his distance off, and turned,
He took poise, and darted forward at full speed;
Before the bar the heavy earth he spurned,
Himself an arrow. They who saw his deed,
Tensed muscles, poised and ran and leaped, and
turned

With close drawn breath, helping him to succeed:
Now he is over, they are over, too;
Foeman and friend were flying when he flew.”

Teachers and scholars look askance at the vocation of athletic coaching, who speak with the highest praise of the dignity of teaching music. When did the Lord ever say that the rhythms of the human body were less majestic or perfect than the rhythms of the human voice?

VI. Tuning in with the Infinite. In the sixth place I like track athletics because, if correctly performed, it not only brings into play the effort of each little individual himself, but, through him, brings into action all the pent-up physical, psychic and spiritual forces in the universe. This is without question the greatest source of power which athletics unlocks for a man. Psychologists tell us that man ordinarily uses only twenty-five per cent of himself. When a man is face to face with the great moments of his life he must find a way somehow to bring into play *all* of himself—he must draw on *all* the hidden reserve of his nature. Every contest in a track meet presents such a moment. To succeed in most things a man finds it necessary to do the *best* he can. To succeed in an athletic contest a man must often (and this sounds like a paradox) *do better than he can*.

I like to tell my athletes how man, made after the image and

likeness of his physical father, is dependent upon the inherited physical heritage handed down from his physical fathers before him, but how he, also, being made after the image and likeness of his spiritual Father, can use also the spiritual heritage which has been handed down to him from the Father who is in heaven. It is at such times that a man often finds that the physical heritage is not nearly so valuable in the moment of crisis as the spiritual heritage. So often have I found that to be the case that I must record a few instances of it here and now.

I had one boy named Bob, a dandy chap, very desirous to prove himself worthy of the team, but whose work all the season had been very mediocre. One day during a meet in which he was running last in nearly all his races I saw him sitting apart, morose and unhappy, blaming himself bitterly. Several days later just before the next meet I took him aside and asked him what was the matter. He said he was disgusted with himself, and had come to the conclusion he was never going to amount to a row of pins in track. I said I thought he was taking himself far too seriously. “You act as though you think the fate of the entire team depended upon your own individual running. It certainly doesn’t. We can get along without your running if you find you can’t run. But we can’t get along without your spirit of enthusiasm and good will. Now forget yourself entirely in the meet tomorrow. Go around and pat the other fellows on the back. Spread sunshine and encouragement to all. And when time for your race comes get down on your marks with a feeling of sheer joy in your heart for the opportunity of self-expression it gives you. Run for the joy of it, dash down the stretch for the love of it. Don’t give a hang about winning.”

I shall never forget the 220 next day. It had to be run around a curve and the track was in poor condition. Moreover the runners had to face a stiff wind blowing up the straightaway. But I shall never forget the way he came around the bend twenty yards ahead of his nearest competitor, his face raised with a glorified joyous expression upon it. When the time was

announced, breaking all local records—and at least three full seconds faster than he had run it the week before he could hardly believe it. “But it is a curved track,” he protested, “and the wind was against me.”

“Never mind,” I said, “three watches caught you. They ought to know.”

Time after time I found that when my boys began slumping until they ceased to have any hope of winning for themselves and finally decided to keep on with the squad merely out of desire to help the morale of the team by not quitting, I found that they began to win races. Conversely when honors and plaudits began to come to men until the steady stream made them conceited or self-conscious, they were almost invariably in danger. These extra outside urges which at first may have furnished a temporary stimulus, very shortly became mere impedimenta. In other words the more unself-conscious and unself-seeking my athletes were, the clearer channels they became for the great inner powers of the creative spirit to flow through them.

I found it rarely necessary to speak to the boys of the existence of a God and the value of faith and prayer—nearly all of them consciously or unconsciously took all this for granted. But I found it very worth while to call their attention to the necessity of banishing selfish thoughts, anger thoughts and fear thoughts which serve to block the channel for the clear expression of their own natural simple faith. One of the striking things about an athletic field is that it is like a battle field in one respect: It presents moments when equal respect is given to man for his religious belief without questioning whether he belongs to the Catholic, Protestant or some of the “impatient” modern creeds.

Those boys who learned how to play the game under my direction with complete unselfishness, and with love in their hearts for their team mates and sheer joy in the sport itself, learned lessons that I am sure will serve them all the rest of their lives. Perhaps the most striking lesson they learned during each

season was that without their knowing how or why, when they did possess this spirit, they were always *in the pink of condition* for their event. Some of my boys discovered also, that when a man is “in tune” he could trust the natural, instinctive impulses that welled up within him. For instance, my half-miler, the president of the college Y. M. C. A., told me that whenever he started a race with love and joy in his heart, and without thinking of winning, he always found himself starting his sprint at exactly the right time and in the right way to win his race. Strange to say, this impulse to sprint often came at times which were quite contrary to the orthodox time for starting a sprint. But regardless of the orthodox technique, whenever he let himself be governed by this inner direction (no matter whether he passed his opponent on the curve or on the straightaway) he *invariably won his race*. Once at a state meet when he found himself about to sprint thus, he let his little calculating self-thought enter in and checkmate the impulse, thinking that in so important a race he should let the orthodox standards of racing govern him. The result was he lost first place by about six inches which he could easily have erased if he had started his sprint when his inner impulse commanded him.

I am aware that athletes from time immemorial feel these impulses and all agree that they come only when they are “in tune.” The result is as I said above, that nearly all athletes are either very superstitious or very religious. And now I should like to make a distinction which too few of our church members are as yet ready to make: Athletes—as well as other folks—are *superstitious* if they stress the *results*; they are *religious* if they stress the “*getting in tune*.”

I have found that athletes do not have to be urged to trust to the Unseen, they have to be urged, rather, to carry this trust far enough. I have no use for what is commonly called “taboos” and “hunches,” which are the mere surface water of the psychic realm taking their rise from the shallow surface levels of superstition; but what I do respect are the deep inner inspirations

which take their rise from the deep artesian wells of the Spirit which is within. So I take my stand like Paul on Mars Hill and try to convert superstition into true religion by discouraging the tendency to look for signs and hunches, and in its place encouraging "getting in tune." And the best way to get in tune is to "love mercy, do justly and walk humbly with thy God." A great athletic coach should tell his boys to rejoice not that they are winning races, but that they are in tune with the Infinite. For the greatest Coach of them all said when His great team of seventy chosen athletes of the spirit, returned from their first great track and field meet in northern Galilee elated at the victories they had won, "Rejoice not that the devils are subject unto you, but rejoice rather that your names are written in heaven."

VII. Universal Brotherhood. In the seventh place I like track athletics because it annihilates all time and space, and makes the entire world one. As the Olympic games today bind the entire world together in one great brotherhood of common interest, so these games in ancient Greece and their counterpart in every generation have bound our todays with our yesterdays and our yesterdays with our tomorrows. Indeed, track athletics is one of the great fundamental unifying influences of the world history. As it was discovered in ancient Greece that when rival states played together they grew to understand each other, so are we learning that the modern revival of these classic games is tending to break down misunderstanding between nations. Yes, we may easily affirm that the most universal and the most timeless and eternal sport as far as this little planet is concerned, seems to be track athletics.

Way back in caveman days a man's social standing depended upon his prowess in being able to run fast, leap far and throw straight. In the Greek legends we read of the power of Hercules and the speed of Mercury, and in the Hebrew scriptures we read of the strength of Samson and the skill of David. In the Nibelun-

genlied we read that Siegfried could throw the stone further than any one else, also the spear. Here is the first "official" appearance of the shot put and the javeline throw . . . The other weight event, the discus throw, we find taking its rise with the Greeks. In the Odyssey we read of Ulysses, without troubling to take his sweater off ("with his cloak still on") seizing a discus which "with a thrust he sent from his stout hand. . . . The stone hummed as it went." The one who measured it called back, "A blind man could pick you out that mark by feeling merely, because it is not huddled in the crowd but lies ahead of all."

In the Iliad this same Ulysses when he entered the long run against Ajax, let his opponent "set the pace" while he "ran in the prints made by his rival's feet" until they entered the home stretch when he passed him in a whirlwind finish. What a wonderful track coach this "wily" Ulysses would have made!

These games were introduced in Rome by Aeneas upon the anniversary of the death of his father, Anchises—a sort of memorial day field meet. We moderns are not the only ones—we thus learn—who would desecrate (or should we say consecrate) a memorial day with a field meet. Because the track was not properly laned for this race, however, the "might have been" winners tripped each other up, and to compensate those who thus lost the medals that should have been theirs, the kind-hearted Aeneas awarded consolation prizes when the meet was over. These Roman and Greek games had become so popular and universal in the time of Christ that Paul made much use of them for purposes of illustration and pointing a moral. His reference to being "girt about with such a cloud of witnesses" implied that all the seats in the colosseum were usually taken, revealing the fact that greater crowds attended field meets in those days than they do even in our modern stadium days, unless we make exception of the Penn Relays and the Drake Relays and the national A. A. field and track games.

But where can you find a more stirring appeal to all that is fine and heroic in a young man's nature than the following:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

Yes, track athletics, more than any other form of sport, is to be found in all ages and in all climes—it annihilates time and space, and more than any other activity known to man, tends to bring the world together in one big brotherhood. And when the world plays together, it will work together and love together.

And so in conclusion I may summarize the seven sources of power that track athletics contributes to man as follows: Track athletics furnishes a means by which young men (1) may give natural spontaneous expression to their genuine, sincere selves; (2) sacrificing and denying themselves unessential luxuries; (3) in the interests of higher efficiency, an efficiency that demands that they do something better than their best; (4) subordinating their own selfish interests to the interests of the larger whole; (5) putting themselves in tune with the rhythms and poetry of the human body, which act is perhaps the purest act of true reverence for God's holy temple, the temple not made with hands; (6) putting themselves in tune with the rhythms of God's unseen forces of the spirit, the unseen poetry of the soul; (7) and, finally, finding themselves, through participation in this sport which knows neither time nor clime, immersed in one great brotherhood which knows no creeds or races or nations, which knows no future and no past.

Chapter 4.

POWER OF RHYTHM

ONE ELEMENT HAS BEEN MENTIONED SO REPEATEDLY IN this book, as an essential, not only to success on the athletic field, but for success in life, that I find it necessary to set aside a whole chapter to deal with that phase alone.

Every form of athletics has its own special technique, but there is one fundamental law of technique that underlies and belongs to all, and that is the law of rhythm.

Probably the most powerful force in Nature is the ocean. Note the rhythmic swells of the sea, the regularity of its tides, how it seems to be eternally keeping time to some old, forgotten melody throughout the ages. Another great power in Nature is the wind. No one has ever seen the wind, all we can observe is the effect of the wind upon objects—the grass and trees—and notice the effect of the wind in a storm—how the trees alternately bend down and up, sway back and forth. The wind when at its strongest usually blows in gusts; it, too, obeys the law of rhythm.

Study the human body, the beating of the heart, the inhalation and exhalation of the breath. The very power and strength and life of the body depends upon obedience to the law of rhythm and bringing every action and every thought into perfect harmony with its laws.

I.

Let me explain how this law of rhythm governs every act one performs in the routine work of training:

When a man flexes his arm in such a way as to contract the muscles, the consequent tension forces some of the muscle cells into the lymph space, and as he relaxes his arm, the blood flows in, bringing new nourishment from the surrounding plasma to restore and rebuild that which is destroyed. To hold the arm in a state of continuous tension would not strengthen the muscle, but would rather weaken and ultimately destroy it. Relaxation is just as important—and we shall soon see, is perhaps a little bit more important, than tension. As a matter of fact, tension is not upbuilding at all—it is destroying. What builds up and makes the athlete is not his moments of exertion, but his moments of relaxation. There would, indeed, be no need for exercise at all were it not that the moment of tension and effort, with the consequent outflow of blood and muscle fibres is necessary just as the ebb of the tide is necessary in order that there may be a return—a coming back—a return flow of the tide.

But of the two remember this, that while both are needed, just as the two swings to a pendulum are needed, the relaxation is more essential than the effort and tension.

A great coach of rowing crews uttered the statement that the crew which could get the most rest between each stroke always won the race. This could be said equally well of mile runners, shot putters and jumpers. The man who goes out each day and exhausts himself in performing will actually retrograde, until at the close of the season he will be a weaker performer than he was at the beginning.

Let me show how this law may be applied wisely to track athletics:

The secret of success in track athletics is to train yourself for your event as you would work yourself up in your backyard

swing—gradually—in such a way that by the end of the season you will be pumped up to your highest power. How can you do it? That is the question.

In the first place, begin your training gradually, just as you start working yourself up in a swing with just a little push each day and a rest between each push. Each day you will find yourself going a little bit higher than the day before. But remember in the first days of training don't press too hard, don't strain, take it gradually. As you wait upon the law of gravitation in the swing, wait upon the law of rhythm in yourself. All things come to him who will but wait upon the laws of Nature. Don't force anything.

In the second place, make the unit of your daily work, not the sustained and prolonged fatiguing effort, but the rhythmic tension and relaxation. If you would "run like the wind," you should in your training imitate the action of the wind which comes in "gusts." The best way to train for sprinting is to utilize this law of rhythm in what is called "wind-sprints" in your early spring training. Start off with a fellow runner jogging easily and freely for about thirty yards and then burst into a full sprint for about thirty yards, and then slow down for the last thirty. The effect of this upon the heart and lungs is exactly like the alternate flexing and relaxing of the arm. It is the ideal, the perfect, perhaps the only effective way to develop power. Later, when the season gets more advanced, the runner can vary this occasionally by a crouching start and running at full speed, then slowing down and then a final burst at the tape. This furnishes excellent training in the two basic problems of the sprinter—starting and finishing.

This kind of preliminary work should be the order of training for the entire track team in the early weeks, the jumpers and weight men as well as the sprinters and long distance runners. After three or four of these wind sprints each day the various members of the team could separate for special work in their respective events.

In applying this rhythmic basis of training to jumpers, I can give the following advice: As no muscle so easily exhausts itself and loses its bounce and resiliency as quickly as the jumping muscles, jumpers and pole vaulters and hurdlers should not train at their events every day. They should, rather, train one day until they are tired, and then rest the next or do some easy jogging and strengthening work while waiting for the bounce in their muscles to return. Jumpers and vaulters can do a great deal of harm to their form, and also do much to weaken their confidence if they train on days when they are stale, or when their jumping muscles have lost their spring. The effort to perform their event when out of condition often causes them to strain or contort themselves and to lose the polish and power which they had when in good condition.

Every muscle has a rhythm and jumping muscles require a longer rhythm of rest than running muscles do. Arm muscles also require a longer period of time to regain their resiliency than leg muscles, but as weight throwers are usually heavy men of great vitality and tending somewhat to be overweight, it is usually customary for them to train every day early in the season until they master the form perfectly. After that I have found that they make faster progress if they actually throw the weights only every other day. Before a meet I find a runner needs one full day of rest, a weight thrower usually two, and a jumper often three. So much for the rhythm of the muscle fibre. The wise athlete will learn to respect it and not work against it. Just as nothing can make the old cat die so quickly as throwing one's self against the upward and downward impetus of the swing, just so nothing will make a man go "stale" as quickly as working against the natural law of rhythm of his own physical nature.

Again let me caution that a man cannot pump a swing up to full speed in a minute. No more can he work himself to full strength in an event by overdoing. Overdoing throws a man back more seriously than underdoing. I find that with nearly all begin-

ners more harm is done from overtraining than from undertraining. And that is because he does not properly understand and respect this fundamental law of rhythm.

And, above all, we must never forget that the key to every athlete's physical condition is not the muscles but the heart. It, too, demands its rhythm of alternate exercise and rest. By avoiding too long periods of tension in exercise, it, too, is safeguarded. But we must carry this still further. For its sake we must have regular hours for rising and retiring, plenty of sleep and meals that are simple and wholesome. Fried foods and pastries should be avoided, and smoking, coffee, tea, and stimulants of all kinds should be absolutely tabooed. The day before a meet, a man should lie down and rest during the period he is usually exercising. Moreover, for the sake of the heart, after a season of hard training is over, a man should take three weeks to "train down" just as religiously as he took three weeks at the beginning to "train up." In fact, in athletics a man should never do anything by sudden jerks but he should rather do everything in curves, with the easy rhythmic swell of the tides.

The Greeks of old used to say, "Measure in all things." The modern athletes should say, "Rhythm in all things." This rhythm, the Finns exemplify not only in their training (diet, rest, bathing, etc.), but also in their running and weight throwing. And no one, since the days of Greece, exemplified it better than Nurmi. Of this great runner, Douglas Fairbanks said: "I have never seen such remarkable rhythm in my life. He had the perfect rhythm of a running ghost."

II.

So far I have been talking about the law of rhythm as an instrument for controlling your physical self, the outer man of flesh and blood. Now I want to step inside of you and explain the working of the law of rhythm to your emotional self—the same self that thinks and desires and dreams and suffers dis-

appointment at defeat and experiences exultation at victory.

No athlete need be told twice that this part of himself is a far more active persistently present chap than the physical body I have just been talking about. We may sometimes forget we have a body, we can never forget we have feelings and thoughts.

It is the mental and emotional condition of an athlete or team, other things being equal, that determines the success or failure he will have. If his emotional center is "in tune" then the athlete is "fit"; if it is not in tune then no matter how fine are his muscles, he is decidedly not in condition for a contest.

And how do we know when our emotions are in tune? Just as the body is strong and efficient which is polarized in one center, and does not have two or three conflicting centers, so are the emotions in tune which are polarized in one center, one aim, and do not have two or three centers.

Every conflicting center, every extraneous, disrupting, decentralizing emotion jars the natural emotional rhythm and reduces a man's efficiency on the gridiron far more seriously than physical jars and bodily conflicts can ever jar him. The emotions that destroy the inner rhythm of a man are hatred, jealousy, lust, envy, pride, vanity, covetousness, and fear. The most marvelously rhythmic of all human emotions is the emotion of love, not the sentimental expression of that virtue, but the deep, sound, sinewy expression of it in the natural unforced love of Nature, love of the game, loyalty to the team, and faith in the coach. When love is the most rhythmical, and hence the most powerful, is when it expresses itself in joy. When it is the most irresistible is when it expresses itself in a quiet peace.

If you want to tune in to these deep inner rhythms of the central self, then, there are three definite distinct ways in which you can do it.

First: *Tune In To Love.*

Find your center in Love. If there are not some persons

in all your circle of acquaintances that you can love, you are certainly in a bad way. Don't love them merely for what they can give to you, but rather for what you can give to them. Find someone you could serve whether he or she ever gives you back anything in return. If you have found such a friend, you have found a window that opens upon God. Then trust that love and let it be for you a little shrine where you can go and find peace when all the world seems going against you. After you have found the love of man whom thou hast seen, try in the stillness of your room to find the love of God whom thou hast not seen.

Second: *Tune In To Peace.*

When you have thrown the wrong things out and have found the right center within, you will find Peace. Peace is merely the sign of the perfect harmonizing of the outer with the inner, the sign that the door is wide open within you for the strong outflowing of power. Here is where prayer will help. Do not pray for victory, pray for peace. Prayer does not create miracles, but the peace and poise which prayer produces create the miracles. Prayer is like training to get into condition—a condition of peace. Jesus, that great athlete of the spirit, had trained so steadily that He was always in condition. Take Him as your model and follow Him.

Third: *Tune In To Joy.*

Joy is like the lightning, and he who has found his center in joy will find he can run like the lightning. Joy is electric. It fills one with power from the smallest brain cell to the tip of the little finger. The quickest way to kill joy is to enter a contest with the sole, sheer desire and purpose of winning. The quickest way to find joy is to enter the contest with the sole, sheer desire of enjoying every part of the process of the contest. Work can be converted into either play or drudgery. It is play if one enjoys every moment of

the game. It is drudgery when the only satisfaction is in the reward at the end. When a thing is ended, it is dead, it belongs to the past. When a person is immersed in a thing, it is alive, it is a thing of the present. The secret of finding joy in track athletics is to live in the present. Pay no attention to the future. Give yourself to life, not to death. Start every race with the intention of enjoying thoroughly the thrill that comes with the crack of the gun, the thrill of moving arms and legs, the exhilaration of rising in the air in the jumps, and the rhythmic motion of running around curved tracks. Run for the love of it, jump for the sheer joy of it and no matter how far ahead the other fellows get, keep this love and joy in your heart and carry on at a good swinging pace and you will get there.

Prayer, then, is dropping all fear and anxiety for the outcome, trusting all to God. God is the only ruler, the only power, and out of the goodness of His infinite heart He will see that all is well. Let the athlete paste under his uniform, or better still, inside his heart, these quotations: "God is my strength and my power." "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty."

The best way to tune into the inner rhythms of the spirit is to drop all fear and anxiety about results, love your team mates, throw yourself with joy into the game, and trust all to God, finding within Him the peace that can sustain you through victory and defeat.