

He be said to be any  
general appreciation



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

He hears to his surprise that in the selection of masters at the great public schools almost as much regard is paid to athletic excellence as to scholarly attainments.

Nor is this athletic enthusiasm confined to schoolboys and college undergraduates. He finds grown-up men continuing to engage in cricket and boating and even in football until they approach middle age; and in the great cities he sees thousands of spectators assembling to watch with breathless interest matches between rival teams of cricket and football players. Even the fair sex is not free from the prevailing passion for outdoor games. They not only show their interest as spectators, but also themselves take part, not only in the lighter kinds of outdoor games, such as lawn-tennis and badminton, but also in hockey, golf and football, thereby greatly benefiting their health, strength, and beauty. Far different is the state of affairs in this country. Here, except in one small section of the community, there cannot be said to be any general appreciation of the value of outdoor games. Indian students, as a rule, have too little inclination for active exercise in the open air, and the educational authorities find it necessary to impress upon schoolmasters the necessity of encouraging them to take part in physical exercise by precept and example.

That this is so, must surely be a bad thing for India. Love of manly games is certainly on the whole an excellent national characteristic. It may be that in England mental education is in some cases sacrificed to ambition for athletic distinction. Possibly it may occasionally happen that too exclusive attention to athletics conduces rather to brutality than to true manliness.

In rare instances delicate boys are tempted to overstrain their physical power and so do themselves bodily harm. But these few possibilities of harm are far outweighed by the advantages on the other side. The greatest and most obvious of these advantages is the benefit to health derived from games in the open air. Schoolboys cannot easily be persuaded of the necessity of taking long walks for the sake of their health; but, if they once acquire a taste for cricket. They will of their own accord spend their playtime in the very way that is best for their minds and bodies, that is, in active outdoor exercise, which will be all the better for being combined with the pleasurable excitement of a friendly contest. Nor is the pleasure and health-giving power of such a game confined to boyhood. Those who at school have become fond of cricket will retain to the end of their life a liking for exercise in the open air, which will be manifested in other beneficial ways when the advance of years or change of circumstances prevents them from enjoying their favourite game. Besides the enjoyment derived from them and their good effect upon our health and strength, outdoor games have other good effects.

The best of them teach courage, endurance, patience presence of mind, and show the advantage of working in concert rather than aiming at nothing but personal distinction. The cricketer or football-player who is inclined to sacrifice to his own vainglory the interest of his side, will soon be taught the error of his ways. Such games also give very valuable training in organization and discipline. The inferior members of cricket and football teams are taught to pay the same obedience to their captain as a soldier must pay to his superior officer. On the captain is thrown what he himself at any rate and his

associates regard as a great responsibility. He has to select without fear and personal favour the best men for his team, must give each of them the position in which he will be most useful, and must know how to alter his arrangements at a moment's notice when a change is required by the circumstances of the game.

No better training could possibly be devised to fit boys to become in after-life good leaders of men.