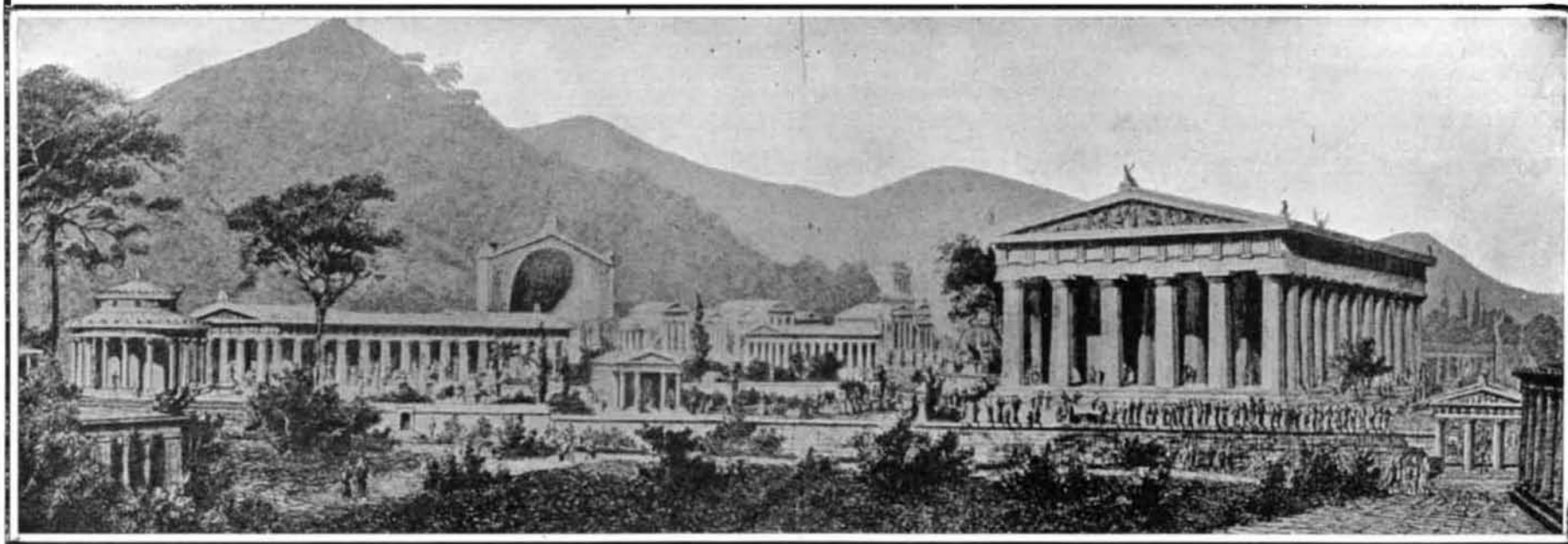


THE OLYMPIC GAMES OF ANCIENT GREECE.

BY WATKISS LLOYD.



A RESTORATION OF OLYMPIA.

Olympia lies a few miles from the sea in the northwest corner of the Morea. Half a century ago its very site had almost been forgotten, so completely had time, earthquakes, and the yet more barbarous hand of man done their work. But in the years 1875-80 the whole of the sacred precinct was excavated by the German Archaeological Society at the expense of the German government. The illustration shows a reconstruction of the sanctuary as it must have appeared in the second century A. D. In its crowd of temples, monuments, and statues could be traced the history of Greece for over a thousand years. In the foreground stands the Temple of Zeus, erected in the fifth century, shortly after the Persian war.



THE five contests which constituted the Pentathlon of the ancient Greeks were leaping—apparently a standing jump—spear throwing, discus hurling, running, wrestling. The trials took place in the order of this enumeration. The leap was taken with the help—if, indeed, help—of the halteres, a sort of dumb-bells held in the hands, and swung backward and forward before the leap. University athletics give no assistance, it appears, to judging of their value. It must have been marvelous if it enabled Phayllus of Croton to leap fifty-five feet, and Chionis fifty-two. There is a serious difference somewhere between such achievements and modern records, whether it is to be referred to the actual feats accomplished—the standard foot-rule employed—or brag. The discus was hurled by an underhand cast, and distance only was considered; as successive throws even from the same standing place might not be in a direct line, a cross line would be re-

thority possible on such a question, any one of which might be accepted as decisive. In his eleventh Olympic Ode he brings the victory obtained by hitting the mark—scopus—with the spear into immediate contrast with that of the discus thrower who covers simple distance.

"By Phrastor aimed, the javelin flew
Right to his mark. Eniceus threw
Over all, with skill adroit
In measured length, the massy quoit,
Wheeling it in his hand about."

In the last lines of the ninth Nemean Ode throwing the lance at a mark is assumed as a natural and familiar metaphor.

Running and wrestling, the two most exhausting exercises, were appropriately placed after the others, and of these two wrestling, as the severest, was last of all. Of course there is a diversity of opinion on the subject. When the scheme of the pentathlon was once completed, it seems meaningless unless the true essence of it was to test a true balance of well-developed forces; and this, in fact, was the value which the ancients assigned to the training which prepared for it and gained for it the approval of physicians, who did not fail to denounce the partial development of the frame which resulted from training for a single exercise as vehemently as any modern opponent of cram inveighs against the intellectual forcing that "dims the eyes and stuffs the head," and for the sake of a class—

"Full in the midst of Euclid slips at once
And petrifies a genius to a dunce."

The evidence is conclusive for the fact that three victories out of the five contests were required for final success; and then we are involved in what appears a difficulty that requires explanation. If the same man won in the first three easier contests, there would be an end of the matter, and the pentathlon as such would be deprived of what was most characteristic, and its purpose frustrated. And must not this have been, under such conditions, a frequent or even a usual event? Trainers of the renown of Pindar's Melesigs were certainly as wise in their generation as crammers in our own, and would not trouble themselves or their men with labor that might be spared for any use it would be at the examination of the contest.

It is perhaps of less real interest to inquire how the ancients settled these matters, considering the paucity of evidence, than to endeavor to evolve upon rational considerations how they might or ought to be arranged. The mere archaeological student may become bewildered about the Olympic custom.

But when foiled in an endeavor to reconcile or understand the scattered and obscure allusions of the ancients, we may be more hopeful in dealing with the problem if we attempt to construct a scheme of a pentathlon on the same independent principles. It then becomes evident that what is required is to secure the prize for that man who, with one or more victories in the severer tests, can combine a test victory, or more than one, in contests of contrasted character. From this point of view, victory in wrestling, as one of the three at least out of five, would be indispensable; and, therefore, those only would be admitted to the trial of wrestling in conclusion who had already been victors in at least two other contests,



A RACING CHARIOT FROM THE VATICAN COLLECTION, ROME.

Chariot racing was a favorite sport of both Greeks and Romans. The Greek chariot was a much lighter vehicle than the Roman one represented in our illustration. In the four-horse chariot race the charioteer stood, but in the two-horse race he sat on a small raised box not unlike that of an American "spider."

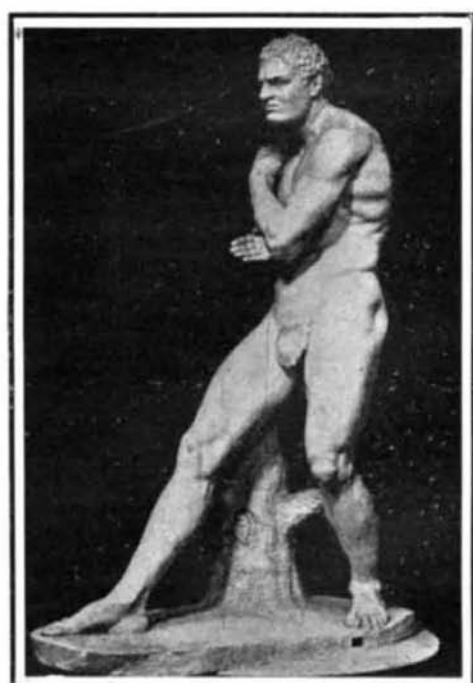
while victors in even more than two would still be bound to this last trial. The other contests fall into pairs. Overhand and underhand hurling with discus



"THE WRESTLERS" FROM THE UFFIZI GALLERY GROUP AT FLORENCE.

The well-known Uffizi group of wrestlers represents not wrestling proper but the pankration. Ground wrestling was not allowed in wrestling proper, but was allowed in the pankration, a sort of scientific rough-and-tumble which combined wrestling, boxing, and even kicking. The group though a late work is full of vigor and free from exaggeration.

quired—a scratch—to decide direct distance, and this explains a phrase which occurs also in reference to the comparative distances of leaps. In the case of spear throwing, not distance alone, as in the trial with the discus, but closeness to the mark was also taken into account. Two passages at least, if not three, can be adduced from Pindar's Epinician Odes, the best au-



"THE BOXER" AT THE VATICAN, ROME.

It is no Greek work but the work of the Italian sculptor, Canova, representing a well-known fight at the Nemean games between two boxers, Creugas and Damoxenus. When neither could win the victory they agreed to hit one another in turn without guarding. Creugas delivered the first blow on Damoxenus's head, and the latter next drove his open hand with such force into his opponent's ribs as to pierce his side and kill him. The brutality of the conception is quite foreign to Greek art, but the artist has reproduced the ancient form of boxing.

or spear are exercises of strength of arm, and in one case with requirement of the faculty of aim; and then the standing jump and the trial of speed test the vigor of the lower limbs in no less diverse action. It would seem not unfair to require that of the two qualifying

victories one must be from each of these pairs. So we should have for participation in the final trial of wrestling, two victors, namely, one in—

Discus and Jumping }
or in Discus and Running } Wrestling.
and one in Javelin and Jumping }
or in Javelin and Running }



THE SACRED CITY OF OLYMPIA—WHERE THE ORIGINAL GREEK GAMES WERE CELEBRATED—AS IT NOW IS.

The raised mass of ruins to the right is the great Temple of Zeus and the wooded knoll behind was dedicated to Cronos.

Of course a third victory might be obtained by one competitor in these primary contests:

Discus, Javelin, and Jumping }
or Discus, Javelin, and Running } Wrestling.
Jumping, Javelin, and Running }
or Jumping, Discus, and Running }

The last series need scarcely be taken into account, and still less the possibility of a fourth victory; an athlete who had gained two of the preliminary prizes, and who knew that he would not better himself by gaining a third, or even a fourth, would be careful, unless he had the greatest confidence in his powers, rightly or wrongly, not to exhaust by useless exertions the strength which would be taxed to its utmost in the decisive contest of wrestling.

At the same time the victor in any two of the preliminary four, combined with success in wrestling, would amply certify a combination of power of the nature proposed to be encouraged by the pentathlon.

If any competitor were victor in three out of the first four contests, his competitor in wrestling could only have gained the other prize, and thus, if successful at last, would only count two victories. Here we are again involved in a difficulty, for we should have the liability for one man to spare himself any exertion beyond what would secure one of the first four prizes, in order to be fresh for the decisive wrestling.

To meet this, it becomes a necessity to reckon as winners both the first and second men in the first four contests. Some of these winners might be excluded from wrestling by only having secured a place once either as first or second. But taking the extreme case, there would be four qualified by double victories thus understood, the first and second men in the pair of contests including discus, and the first and second in the pair including javelin throwing. That is, eight places admit of being distributed in pairs among four men at most; or they might be distributed between three men, so that no one had less than a pair, though either one or two might have more; or between two men in any proportion, so long as neither had less than two.

If only two came out qualified to enter for wrestling, there would, of course, be no difficulty; if four were qualified, they would cast lots for pairs in the first instance, and then the victors in each pair would wrestle for the final prize.

In case three were qualified, neither more nor less, it would be necessary to cast lots for the advantage of sitting out to wrestle with whichever of the other pair might be victor. The only scheme that presents itself for equalizing chances in some degree would be for C to be matched not only with A, the victor of the first pair, but, if he were winner, then with B, the vanquished in the first match. Each then might have to contend with two adversaries; but, nevertheless, unfairness would still remain, as A would be at the comparative disadvantage of having to engage two men in succession unexhausted by a previous encounter.

Now the Greeks—to compare their practice in this point first—had certainly a scheme for settling the difficulty of a prize for wrestling when there were three competitors. The man who drew a "bye" (this seems to be the technical term) was called the *epheirus*—literally one who lies by.

The classical citations are also decisive, that three victories were necessary to constitute a victor in the pentathlon as such, and it is most important to note "that in every case where we hear of wrestling as part of a pentathlic contest, the winner in the wrestling is victor in the whole."

Again, there is strong presumptive evidence in favor of a second place in the four secondary contests being reckoned provisionally as a victory, to count as one if followed up by decisive victory in the greatest contest of all. Philostratus gives a story of the institution of the pentathlon by the Argonauts at Lemnos, and may be assumed to have told his story consistently with established usages. Telamon threw the discus best,

and Lynceus the spear; that this victory is assigned to a hero of supernatural sharpness of sight is another proof that accurate aim was a requirement. One of the sons of Boreas ran the farthest and the other leaped the farthest—very naturally, as they are represented winged. None, therefore, gained a double victory; but Peleus, who was first in none of these con-

tests, but second in every one, gained the prize in wrestling, and so was the first pentathlic victor.

Ancient authority fails to support me in requiring that the two qualifying victories out of the first four should be of contrasted character. The seer Tisamenus was victorious in running and leaping, but was overthrown in wrestling by Hieronymus, who as first in



THROWING THE JAVELIN AT A TARGET FROM HORSEBACK.

At Olympia the only competition with the javelin was one for distance, but at the Panathenaic festival at Athens there was an event in which mounted youths threw javelins at a target as they galloped past. The prizes at these sports were jars of olive oil, and it is from one of these prize vases that the above illustration is taken. One rider has already cast his javelin and it is fixed near the center of the target.

spear and discus throwing scarcely evinced such true pentathlic prowess as if he had interchanged one of his other victories. A pentathlic victory must, of course, be more or less honorable, according to the standard of distinction of the victories which secured it in conjunction with the indispensable wrestling feat. Particularly honorable would be those cases in which more than the necessary two preliminary victories had been

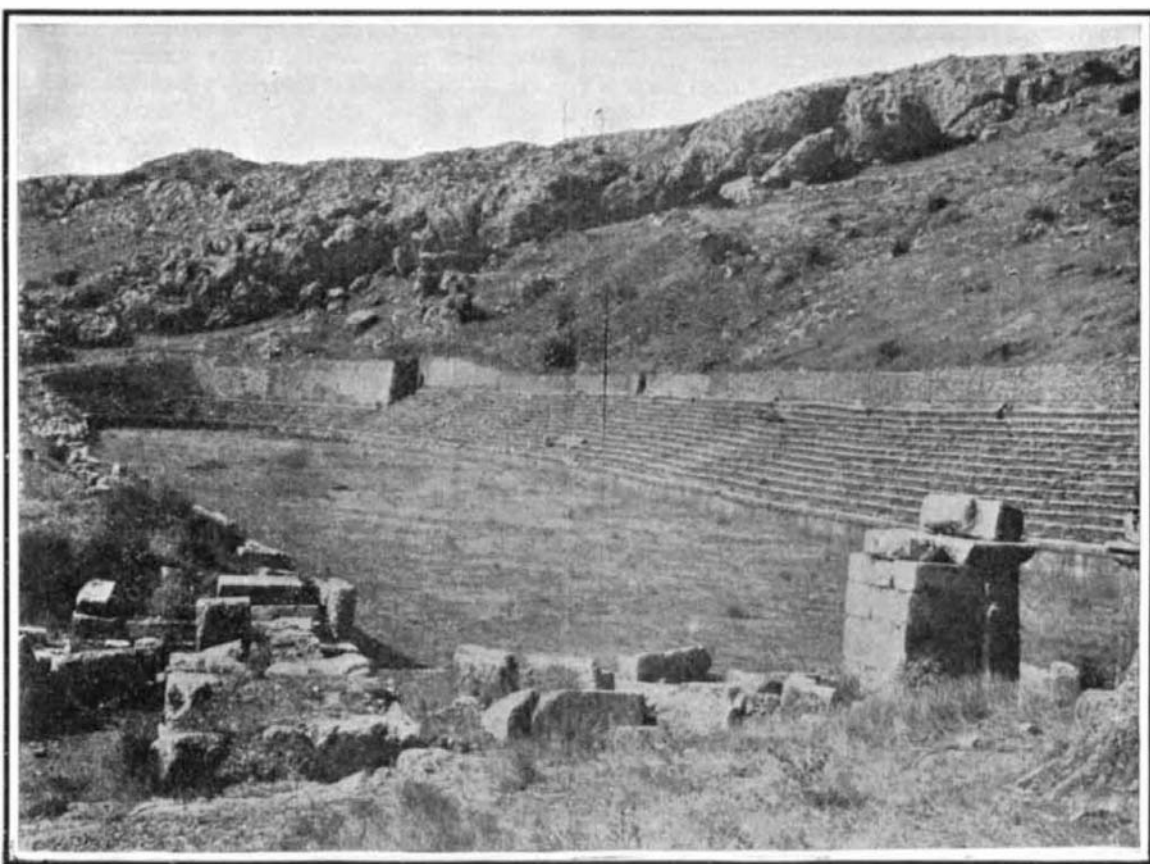
gained. Indeed, by the time the last contest was reached, the competitors might be ranked according to the order of their achievements up to that point. In the case of the Lemnian pentathlon no competitor has three victories in the strictest sense, and Peleus is only victor upon a valuation of total marks. Unless some principle of this kind was adopted it might constantly occur that no one competitor secured three first places, and in consequence the pentathlic prize could not be assigned at all. There is evidence that in the Olympic chariot race even a fourth place was called a victory. Thucydides states that in the games of the ninetieth Olympiad, Alcibiades conquered with his chariots as first, second, and fourth; a fragment of the ode which Euripides wrote on the occasion gives the victories as first, second, and third, instead of fourth, a difference which is explainable. A Lacedæmonian excluded from competing had entered his chariot as Boeotian, but could not resist rushing upon the course to crown his driver; he was driven back with blows, and the disallowance of his place moved up the fourth of Alcibiades, which perhaps might not otherwise have counted as a victory at all.

Surely it is desirable that a principle akin to that of the ancient pentathlon should be introduced into modern athletic sports, and the highest prizes given to the winners of double events at least of such contrasted character as to prove that perfection in one exercise has not been obtained at the cost of utter incapacitation for any other.

The assumption that a victory in the final wrestling was indispensable for the pentathlic victor may explain why it is not specially exhibited on some monuments that seem commemorative of success in this contest. An ancient discus is engraved with a leaper on one side, a javelin thrower on the other, "the discus itself, by a pleasing conceit, filling up the third place, and thus becoming a complete symbol of the pentathlon of success, in which contest it was doubtless a votive memorial." It is tempting, no doubt, to recognize here the three victories that would give a majority out of five; but to do so would, as it has appeared, deprive the pentathlic scheme of justification for existence. It would cease to be a test of muscular strength, developed proportionately throughout the frame, and combined with dexterity and skill.

The conclusions which are here deduced as to the regulation of the pentathlon from simple consideration of its leading purpose appear to be coincident for the most part with those arrived at by Dr. Pinder in a work of length and learning ("Der Fünfkampf der Hellenen"). The accompanying illustrations are reproduced from the Sphere.

Cork-like Mass (G. Hagemann).—Comminuted cork is saturated with a solution of nitrated cellulose (gun cotton) in ether and alcohol and left in the molds imparting the desired form under pressure until the larger portion of the solvent is evaporated and on opening the mold the mass retains its shape, which is the case of small objects takes from 4 to 6 days. The product, known as "suberite," serves as a substitute for cork.



A TYPICAL GREEK STADIUM. THE TIERS OF SEATS OF THE SPORTS ARENA AT DELPHI AS IT NOW APPEARS.

The stadium at Delphi recently excavated by the French is the best preserved and its situation the most romantic of all Greek stadia, being constructed on the steep rocky slope that overlooks Apollo's sanctuary. Like that at Olympia it consists of a straight narrow course some 200 yards long, but unlike Olympia it has at the western end a semicircular theater which was used for boxing, wrestling, and such events. To the right of the picture can be seen the stone slabs which marked the starting line. A similar row of slabs existed at the other end. Each slab has two parallel grooves cut in it, apparently to mark the position of the runner's feet. Between the slabs are square sockets for posts which it is tempting to suppose were used for roping the course, though of this we have no proof.