

# OH, THE GLORY THAT WAS—AT ONE TIME—GREECE!

Fairly Good Athletes Were Those Ancient Greeks, but New York Outplays Them at Their Own Games

WANTED—Sixty modern Greek gods; must be perfect specimens of manhood, round of limb, hard of muscle and light of foot. City boys preferred.

WHEN this modest want found its way to the bulletin board of the Shakespeare Celebration Committee a week ago men and women who thought they knew their New York from Staten Island to The Bronx heaved a combined sigh of despair and announced that they had reached the first insurmountable obstacle of the tercentenary.

High collars, modern clothes, stuffy apartments, cold storage food and such incidents to city life do not produce hard muscles and perfect physical development, they argued. One man went so far as to cite statements from a recognized authority upon bodily diseases to show that humanity was rapidly slipping away from nature and health. He said that city life generally was the enemy of humanity and that New York life—well, he knew of other methods of suicide, but none so certain and effective.

All of which shows that the scientists must not be taken too seriously. For the committee has succeeded in finding sixty New York boys who, by all available measurements and physical tests, appear to outrank the athletes of ancient Greece whom they are to impersonate at the Shakespeare Masque at City College Stadium.

If measurements are to be accepted as proof, New York mothers have succeeded in accomplishing more in the way of training their sons in such a manner as to make them perfect, physically, than did the old Greek mothers, whose one ambition was to bear sons who would become great warriors.

Practically no evidences of the much advertised handicaps of tenement and apartment house life were found and, settlement workers and military experts notwithstanding, the "softness of civilization" that has been described as the greatest menace of the nation in these days of military preparedness was absolutely lacking!

Delusions about the efficacy of the hardening process practised by the trainers of the far famed Greek athletes, under which the candidate for honors in the stadium was exposed to the elements, privations and even torture, suddenly disappeared. The hardening process of playing in the streets, backyard baseball and delicatessen food appear to be at least as effective—possibly more so.

After much consultation and debate, it was agreed to call in Dr. Charles W. Crampton, physical director of the New York public schools, on the theory that he might be able to suggest some solution of the problem. It was not even hinted, however, that anybody expected to find the sort of development necessary for the committee's purposes among the city's schoolboys.

## COULD NEW YORK FILL AN ORDER FOR GREEK ATHLETES? WHY, SURELY.

"Can you tell us where we might find sixty young men who might approach—just approach, you understand—the development of the ancient Greek athletes?" asked Mrs. Grace Jenkins Anderson, director of the dances that will be staged during the Greek Interlude at the Stadium programme. "We're hoping that we may find a few who won't make the dances appear ridiculous by comparison."

Dr. Crampton, who knew the sort of boys who were to be found in the public schools, smiled broadly.

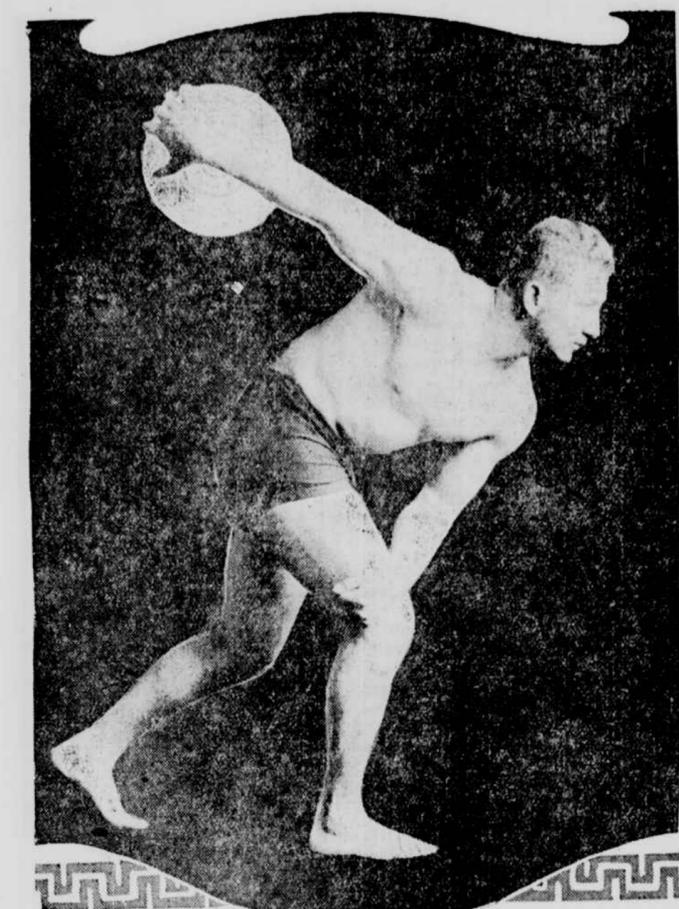
"What would you say to having the Greek athletes you are to impersonate duplicated, or even outclassed, by modern boys?" he asked.

"I'd be convinced that you were joking about what is a serious problem to us," was the reply of the dancing expert. "Very well, I'll send you some candidates next Friday," was the final agreement of the school official.

At the appointed hour 200 typical New York schoolboys appeared at the gymnasium where the rehearsals were to be held. Just offhand, one might have said that they had little chance of being selected for the parts that required muscular development. Such is the discouraging effect of modern tailoring.

But when the candidates had separated themselves from the handicaps of trousers, shirts, collars and shoes, appearing in the abbreviated garb of the ancients, the experts looked and acted their surprise. Well rounded muscles, square shoulders and calves such as are usually expected only in marble were disclosed in wholesale quantities.

ASTOUNDINGLY promising raw material, the dance experts admitted, but still raw material only. Here, again, was a surprise. A few questions developed the fact that among New York's school athletes—among the candidates from which the dancers were to be selected—were discus throwers, hurdle jumpers and all around field athletes who had broken not only the records of modern Greek athletes, but of the ancients whose feats are the subject of myth and legend. Investigation revealed the fact that



every known record of the ancient Greeks but one has been broken by New York schoolboys! With the exception of the broad jump with weights, modern trained city boys, the product of the tenements, in some instances, had little difficulty in adding inches and subtracting minutes from the best records of the ancient athletes. The failure to break this record probably is to be found in the fact that it never has been attempted. It was agreed that there was nothing to be gained in weighing a jumper down before attempting to break records, just as it has been agreed by prizefighters that there is nothing to be gained in the once popular practice of training with weights in their hands, on the theory that they could punch so much harder when the weights were removed and they boxed with the gloved hands.

Greek legend tells us that a certain champion succeeded in making a record of thirty feet for a broad jump, carrying weights. In view of the ease with which other records have been smashed by schoolboys, it is generally believed that the historian may have added a few feet to this record, or that poetic license, rather than the tape measure, was used in crediting the then popular hero with this accomplishment.

Actual measurements, in feet and inches, by which a comparison of the physical development of the ancients and modern athletes may be made, are lacking. The press agents of the early heroes of the stadium preferred to use their imaginations in carving the exploits of their favorites into history, rather than the more conservative tape measure—or whatever took the place of an inch rule in those days.

The "Young David" of Michaelangelo, which is accepted as being as authentic in its proportions, reveals no higher development than does the average New York schoolboy of athletic inclinations. Moreover, it is pointed out that the records of the ancient Greeks were made by adults—the sort of men now classified as professionals and barred from competition with the amateur athletes who have outdistanced them so completely in every branch of athletic endeavor.

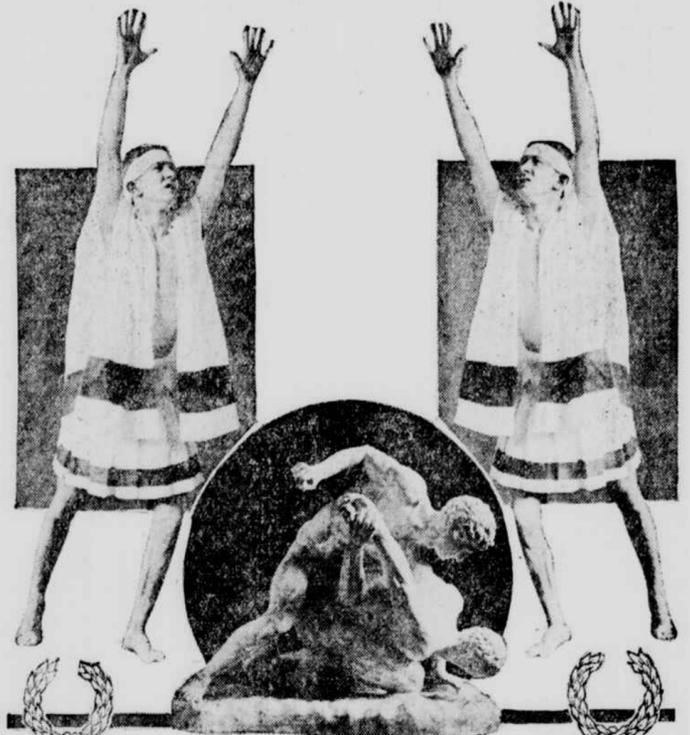
As the numerous candidates were tried out it was discovered that the chief difficulty would be in eliminating the numerous desirable competitors in order to bring the number down to the desired sixty. The rival claimants for recognition were so nearly matched as to desirability, that it finally was agreed to select those who could give the greatest amount of time to rehearsals and for other considerations not involving their purely physical qualifications.

## NOBODY SUSPECTED IT, BUT THE TOWN IS FULL OF CLASSIC DANCERS

Right here it may be added that these boys, many of whom had never before attempted anything approaching classic dancing, have proved such apt pupils that it is possible some of them may make professional use of their newly discovered ability. The dances in which they are to take part involve hurdle jumping, discus throwing and other athletic feats in pantomime. Familiarity with the movements and the suppleness of body that accompany training in the field have proved such important factors in their success that the dancers found numerous rehearsals superfluous and were permitted to smash the schedule of their instructor, along with the records that have been wrecked by their efforts.

The explanation of the high physical development of the average New York schoolboy is found in the fact that a

WHAT WOULD ACHILLES SAY TO THIS?  
 "Boys in the city's public schools have succeeded in breaking practically every record of the ancient Greek athletes but one—the broad jump with weights. They never have attempted to break that one, because of the fact that it is not a logical feature of modern sports. A combination of modern thought and principles of the early Grecians probably is the cause of the efficiency of these boys. There is absolutely no question of their supremacy over the ancients."—Dr. Charles Ward Crampton, physical director of the New York public schools.



modern application of the methods of the ancient Greeks is being made in the public schools. The first effort of Dr. Crampton, as he explains it, is to arouse interest in sports on the part of the boys. After the interest has been aroused to such an extent that physical training becomes a recreation instead of one of the school studies, the task is simple.

Work of interesting the boys has progressed to such an extent that slightly more than 100,000 boys, or more than one-third of the total enrollment of boys in the schools, participate in the competitive meets held in various parts of the city. Boy graduates of high school enjoy the benefits of not only their knowledge of the three R's, but have had twelve years of painstaking training in the development and care of their bodies. During this period the time devoted to athletics ranges from half an hour to an hour a day, to say nothing of the extra time devoted to their training by ambitious amateurs after special track and field honors.

The day's routine of the modern schoolboy athlete and the ancient Grecian athlete do not differ widely in their general divisions. As far as compari-

sons are possible, they may be tabulated in this manner:

	Ancient Greek,	School-boy,
	hours.	hours.
Sleep	8	8
Study, reading, etc.	3	6
Meals, bath, dressing, etc.	2	2
Military training and duties to the state	3	..
Worship	1	..
Recreation and sports	7	8
Total	24	24

But the wide difference between these two schedules lies in the varying mode of living. The ancient rival of the modern athlete spent all his waking hours and much of his sleeping period beneath the sky, exposed to the elements. The New York boy spends all of his sleeping period and most of his waking hours indoors, protected from the elements in a manner never dreamed of by the ancients. Steam heat, complicated systems of dressing and the use of numerous sheets and blankets would have been scorned by the Grecian, who believed that the closer he got to nature the greater would be his strength.

The bulk of the food of the ancient

was meat, some of which was eaten raw and practically all of which was the product of his own hunting. Less than one-third of the food eaten by the New York boy is meat. Not only has the modern packer set a prohibitive price upon a diet of meat alone, but the appetite of the modern man does not require it. Moreover, the food that could be slain with a spear in or about New York could hardly be expected to maintain life very long, even if one were permitted to ignore police regulations.

In addition to these differences, the ideals of a modern citizen of New York are so different from those of the war-seeking ancient, who won his home, his wife and his food with his spear, that the modern athlete might be expected to suffer because of it. The youth who plans to become a lawyer or doctor, who is subjected to the restrictions of a modern city's community life, and who sees the broad fields that were such an important element in the life of the ancient not more than once a month, is not expected by the average athletic director to acquire any considerable bodily strength unless he seeks it—and seeks it industriously.

## SIMPLE EXPOSURE DOESN'T MAKE A MAN HEALTHY, BUT THE GREEKS DIDN'T KNOW THAT.

Probably the least surprised person who has learned of the supremacy of New York boys over the early day athletes whose exploits have been the subject of songs, poems and legends, is Dr. Crampton, whose programme of physical training has had much to do with bringing about this result. He is convinced that it is but the logical result of man's development, just as electricity, railroads and other aids to man have improved his manner of living.

"There is no question but that the modern boy, living in any great city, particularly New York, has more opportunity for attaining health and physical perfection than had the ancient athlete," said Dr. Crampton. "We hear a great deal about tenement houses, the poor food with which he must be nourished and other supposed handicaps of our complicated lives, but they are more than overcome by the advantages that have come with them."

"We have learned so many things in the many generations that have intervened since the days of the ancient Grecian that we are able to make better use of poorer material than he had. We have found that simple exposure doesn't make a man hard and healthy; that torture doesn't develop bravery. We have learned from the Greeks that constant training of the right sort will develop the body and that right living will result in prolonged health."

"The Grecians, who believed that life on their broad plains was the one essential of a healthy existence, really had no advantage over the boy who spends most of his time in the streets of a great city. The application of certain principles, well known to-day, to one's methods of living will bring about the results for which we all are striving."

"Up to the present time many of the theories of experts have been theories alone. But that was before the days of the big track and field tournaments, in which modern athletes strove to break the records of the ancients. The result is that they have outstripped the Grecians, both modern and ancient, in every branch of outdoor sport in which they have trained."

"Of course we are somewhat handicapped in making comparisons because of the inaccuracy of many of the old rec-

Modern Clothes and Cold Storage Food Do Not Quite Seem to Have Ruined the Race After All.

ords. But there is no doubt in the minds of those who have made a careful study of the subject that the modern schoolboy can accomplish not only as much in physical development as did the ancient Greek, but can absolutely outstrip him in the very departments in which he specialized.

"I feel certain that if you could place sixty of the early Grecians up beside the sixty boys who are to appear in the Shakespeare masque the ancients would suffer by comparison. We're producing real men nowadays, no matter what may be said about the 'softness' that comes from commercial life."

Mrs. Anderson's satisfaction with the dancing of her recruits is as complete a verification of the statements of Dr. Crampton as he could hope to obtain.

"These boys fall into the graceful poses that are so desirable in classic dances just as we like to imagine the early Grecians did," said Mrs. Anderson. "Rhythmic movements are easy to them because their physical training has given them a suppleness of body and strength that are lacking in the average dancer, even professionals. There is none of the artificiality that one finds in the fancy modern dances, but that realism of pantomime that is real art."

"When we started out to find our dancers we expected to make as good a compromise as we could between what we needed and what we could get. The results have been astounding. New Yorkers will see not the impersonation of Greek gods but sixty modern Greek gods."

"I think that it must be the climate and manner of living of New Yorkers that does it. At any rate, we are convinced that we couldn't find a like number of more perfectly developed young men in any community in the world."

All of which is some boom for New York as a health resort.

From Amazon to Flapper.  
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were loaded with birds. Every bird but the ostrich and the well known eagle seemed to be represented. Parrots were as thick as leaves, and there were whole covens of turkeys or vultures, I couldn't tell which.

Under three arches at the back were hung three bird-cages—one under each arch. Canaries were probably in these. None of the other birds could have possibly got into the cages. The drummer worked a warbler as the curtain went up, and the company on the stage awaited applause for the scenic effect. It was given by a sailor who sat two seats in front of me.

In this act one of the comedians worked with the chorus in what I could see has come to be a standard modern burlesque stunt. He sang a song with chorus, and then each girl in turn sang a verse while the comedian did funny business. He told one good story, too. He led forward a girl and indicated a diamond ring on her finger. He said she got it in Waterbury with some other things. As there is a bit of real pathos in the story it is worth repeating.

It seems that in Waterbury there lived an old lover of the girl—a bartender. While the company was there the girl got word that he was dying. He wanted to see her just once more.

On account of the town being Waterbury I thought the joke was going to be something about a death watch, but I was wrong.

"You've been a good girl to me," said the bartender. "You've kept' at work and stayed away from this town except for the few days every year that you had to be here with the show. I appreciate that."

He coughed hollowly for a few minutes and then continued:

"I'm dying, and there's no one in this whole wide world that I can trust but you. I don't expect no monument, but I do look to you, my girl, for to see that the right thing is did. I went into bartending before cash registers had become an eyesore and a curse to honest mixers. I was able to save money. Here it is—\$500, my girl. Do the proper thing by me."

When the comedian got this far with the story he held up the girl's hand, pointed at the ring and said:

"So she went out and bought him this stone."

People all over the house were dodging and wincing as if from a blow.

This thought was in my mind as I was silently leaving the theatre. I was thinking how I had noticed that every one on the stage during the performance had seemed to be trying to assist in unobtrusive ways one woman who, totally incapable of singing, nevertheless had a couple of the principal solos. Her singing was awful, but none of the members of the company pretended to notice how bad it was.

"Yes," said I to myself, "burlesquers are a kindly, simple folk after all. Their hearts are in the right place. They are probably doing all they can to help that poor woman maintain her position."

I mentioned the composition of my reverie to a large man near me.

"Who do you mean, that rotten singer that's the worst thing in the whole show?" he asked.

"Yes," said I. The poor old lady that everybody was so kind to."

"Kind to!" he ejaculated with a snarl. "Kind to! They have to be. She's the wife of a guy that's got a piece of the show."

It would seem that there's no heartfelt sincerity even in burlesque.