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# MODERN ATHLETICS

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# MODERN ATHLETICS

BY

G. M. BUTLER

*President, C.U.A.C., 1920-21*

With a Foreword by

P. J. NOEL BAKER



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*Dedicated  
to all those from whom,  
in my efforts to teach,  
I have learnt so much*

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## FOREWORD

By PROFESSOR P. J. NOEL BAKER

*President, C.U.A.C., 1910-12*

THE ancient Greeks were the first to create much of what we now think most beautiful and most valuable in the civilization of the West. Among other things, they were the first to create track and field athletics. They thought that track and field athletics were worth a great deal of effort and a great deal of thought; they found in them a source of health and strength for the athlete, a source of pleasure for the spectator, and a source of inspiration for the artist. They believed in the moral discipline of athletic training and they valued both the beauty and the thrill of athletic contests. For these reasons they made of their Olympic Games a national institution of the highest religious, social, and cultural significance.

There are more and more people in Great Britain to-day who think of track and field athletics as the ancient Greeks used to. These people look forward to an ever wider extension of the oldest and the most thrilling of games. They look forward to the time when every city and town throughout the country will have its stadium and when the athletes who use these stadia will be numbered by the hundred thousand. They believe that the social results, both physical and moral, of such a development as this of the game of athletics would be immeasurably good.

Such people will be grateful for this book. They will be grateful to Mr Guy Butler for having written it, and they will be glad that it has been published under the auspices of so eminent a public institution as the Cambridge University Press. Nothing could be more appropriate, for Mr Butler is himself one of the greatest of all Cambridge athletes, he was President of a Cambridge University team which included H. B. Stallard, H. M. Abrahams, and D. G. A. Lowe, and he has a record of athletic service for his University and for the Achilles Club which will rarely be surpassed. Mr Butler has, indeed, every qualification for the task which he has undertaken. He has had the experience of nine wonderful seasons in the first flight of athletic contests; he has competed on three occasions in the Olympic Games; he holds a world's record; he is the possessor of one gold, one silver, and one bronze Olympic medal; on one afternoon at the Paris Games of 1924—and in my belief it was the most brilliant of his many achievements—he twice beat 48 seconds for 400 metres from a standing start. During the whole of his active track career he made a close study of athletics, in respect both of general training and of specialized technique. For some years he had the further experience of applying his theories and of testing their validity as Games Master in an important school. He now offers the results of his study to a wider public in this admirable book.

The book in form is addressed to athletes who are still at school. To them it may have a special value, and there are no Games Masters or schoolboy runners who can afford to be without it. But in fact it will be useful to

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athletes of every age and calling. It is admirably constructed and admirably concise, and there are few people who would not profit by its instruction on matters of general health. The training rules are sound, the advice to parents and masters are wise and cogent, the exercises are ingenious and effective, the tables, diagrams, and illustrations are far more valuable than anything of the kind which I have seen before.

In conclusion, I can only say that I wish Mr Butler's book every possible success, and that I hope it may be the forerunner to an even larger and more comprehensive work, including those events which for present purposes he has left out; and I must add, with an emotion born of an experience as long as Mr Butler's own, how ardently I wish it had been written twenty years ago.

P. J. NOEL BAKER

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## PREFACE

MY chief object in writing this book is to provide for schoolboys, who are keen to make the most of their training, a means whereby they can get hold of the main principles of modern methods in each event. It is my belief that more can be taught through the eye by means of action photographs, especially excerpts from slow-motion cinematograph films, than by many words; hence the lavish illustrations in this book. I hope also that the chapter on Organization may perhaps be of some assistance to those who have charge of School Sports; if only the lines on which these are run could be brought more up-to-date, it would be an enormous gain for athletics throughout the country. Lastly, although this book does not pretend to deal fully with any of the subjects on which it touches, yet I venture to believe that it will benefit not only the boys for whom it is primarily written, but also the many club athletes who want to improve their performances. Certain events, such as the Pole-Vault, the Discus, the Javelin, and the Hammer, I have omitted because, as yet, I have had no practical experience of them, and also because I doubt the wisdom of their inclusion in the School Sports unless five or six weeks are allowed for them. At the same time I believe them to be excellent events if done properly, and I am in sympathy with Captain F. A. M. Webster's efforts to get as many as possible included in the London Athletic Club's Sports at Stamford Bridge.

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PREFACE

I wish to acknowledge most gratefully my indebtedness to Mr John Betts, from whose films I have taken the series of excerpts; to Professor A. V. Hill for some very instructive suggestions on the physiology of training; to Mr G. V. Carey of the Cambridge University Press, who has taken so much trouble in converting the rough diamond of my MS. into a tolerably smooth, if not a polished, stone; also to many friends who in varying ways have been of the greatest assistance to me in the preparation of this book.

G. M. B.

*March 1929*