

Setting

# The Game is The Thing

(original  
skin  
copies)

are dominant

All athletic contests are a throw-back from the Game of War. *Fighting games*

where great masses of men are aggregated in camps and cantonments. It is a perfectly natural thing to expect games of combat and contact from these enlisted men. In track a throw of the javelin simulates the use of the spear; in baseball the throwing <sup>of</sup> the ball simulates the early day hurling of the rock; and the swinging of the bat simulates the club in the strong right arm of the elemental man who swung viciously to fell the animal, *to provide* the food which was so necessary for the caveman table.

Boxing and wrestling <sup>bring</sup> brought the individuals in close contact with each other. Through the hundreds and thousands of years that men have been clutching at each other's throats in mortal combat, this game of contest and conquest has been going on. The man who wrote the rules of the game merely put in some thou-shall-not-inhibitions. ~~and we call these~~ *games when we apply inhibitions to fighting actions.* gladiatorial combats ~~rules of the game.~~

The fellow who observes these <sup>rules</sup> is a sportsman, so to speak; the man who does not is a mucker. So we have veneered civilized society with inhibitions, and in our society we have said that the man who does not follow these rules is not a good sportsman. He does not belong. The man who follows these rules we cheer for him. The athlete who breakes these rules we jeer at him or shun him.

Why do we cheer for an athlete who executes an exceptional feat of skill? Simply because through these hundreds and thousands of years that men have been struggling we admire this struggle to such a degree that we struggle with them. We admire it because when we sit on the sideline we are playing the game in our own mind's eye in the same manner as are the men on the field. The spectator is a participant because he takes sides. His cheering and partisanship is a sure symptom that he is in the game.