

3. Ever better thinking in our efforts to make life better to live.

We must not think of any one of these as something we can get once and for all and then we have it and can rest content. This is exactly a false doctrine. Life is not run on that basis, as we nowadays see more clearly than ever before. If we look about us we see that life, the world of affairs, history, experience - whatever term you like - is ongoing stream, running always toward the future, always bringing new things, leaving off some old things, yes, but rather joining new to old in ever new combinations and patterns. And this oncoming stream of experience is always more or less unpredictable - we never know what a day may bring forth. As we face this oncoming stream we always have preferences, some things we have beforetimes liked, we wish them again or more of them for ourselves and our loved ones. Somethings that have happened to us or to others we do not like; these we try to avoid or avert. And as we have preferences, so we make efforts - as I have said - to get or avert, and the outcome in any case is always more or less precarious. We wish, we hope and we try. Sometimes we succeed. Often we fail.

Life, then, is a stream mingled of new and old, of hope and fears and efforts, with outcomes precarious. It is in this changing, shifting stream that we seek to keep our health and the health of our children and pupils as fine, as rich, as we can, seek to maintain healthy integrated personalities, amid the ever oncoming rush of new demands, new possibilities, new problems, and new dangers. And it is in this stream - in this kind of stream - that thinking is needed, continually needed, needed by all if they are to be allowed to go about loose without guardians. When, then, we ask education to work for health and for the integrated personality and for better thinking, it is for health and personality and thinking in this ever shifting, ever precarious stream of life. Education must be correlative of our kind of life, and both are always in process, always shifting and becoming.

WHAT IS MODERN EDUCATION?

The topic assigned to me on this programme asks as to "the place of athletics in modern education". What kind of education, we may ask, is "modern" or, perhaps better what kind of education is proper in our modern times. Modern education is the kind that consciously tries to fit this kind of ever oncoming, ever shifting, precarious stream of life. Such a life presents us with an unending stream of situations, always new but mingled of new and old elements. We strive to control the situations as best we can. To do this, we are always thinking and contriving. We continually face situations that call for attention and management. As we face each such situation and grapple with it, we use old knowledges and skills but we apply them in new ways, in new proportions. We have to adapt the old patterns to the new difficulties.

Now education is intimately enmeshed in this continual grappling with life's situations, so intimately that it is an aspect of it, not properly a part of it. The aspect is always more intimate than the part. So here. Education is an inseparable aspect of this life process. As we face each new situation, we bring to bear on it what we have learned in the past, knowledge and skill and attitude. As we manage the new situation, we learn something more from it. Each experience teaches something, if no more than to reinforce the old. But still more, if we meet our new situations, each with his best possible use of the past, we shall each of us in general improve over the past. We shall learn better how to manage. If we keep this up, we shall accumulate better and better ways of meeting situations. This better and better accumulation is education par excellence.