

in some of our larger schools, and yet for want of intelligent co-operation on the part of the regular teacher, they are practically void of any lasting results. The children see that the physical practice is regarded as of secondary importance by the teachers of the school, and they come to regard it in the same light.

But in the not distant future no teacher who is not alive to the importance of *physical* education will be allowed to teach in *any* department of our public schools.

The question of the present is, not how many more hours shall be given to study, but how much time shall be devoted to the development of the physical; and the query that is of absorbing interest in this connection is, in what form shall the physical education of our children be given? Parents complain, and not without reason, that the ordinary calisthenic drill has no effect either upon the health or the figure of the growing child. Indeed, it may be seriously argued whether any movements calculated to confirm the body in its rigidity and awkwardness are not always more injurious than beneficial. To hold certain attitudes and contract one set of muscles while others are held rigid, produces physical development anything but harmonious, and yet most of the prevailing systems of physical education ignore in their methods the relation which muscles bear to each other.

Spencer, in his essay on physical education, gives us ideas regarding the normal development of the child which are worthy of more intelligent study than has yet been accorded them. He wisely recognizes the playground as the place where the physical life can be most harmoniously developed; and it is questionable if in the future there will be any exercise for bodily culture other than that suggested in intelligently arranged games. A white-haired school-master shook his head gravely when I made a similar statement at an educational institute last summer and said that I didn't understand how necessary it was that in a school-room everything should be formally arranged. I acknowledged that I didn't; indeed, I was heterodox enough to say that I did not want to understand it, for I believe our excessive formality in the past has been an injury in every sense to the full, free harmonious development of the child.

Another master objecting to the opposition to the formal calisthenic drill said that since it had been introduced into his school he observed a new snap and vim about the teachers, even in their voices. And then I said: "Well, for that reason if for no other, let us abolish formal gymnastics; for if after all those years of effort to get the snap out of our teachers' voices, we are now to have a training to put it back, our children are doomed."

I am not a theorist simply, however. I realize that while the ideal playground is being made, and the ideal system of physical culture is being ordered, the bodies of our children must not be neglected. What can teachers do in the meantime? They can, in the first place, be themselves models of physical grace and freedom to their pupils. They can,