

and management on the Government basis would be better than one ever fluctuating with the political pulse. If that were done, the State would not be called upon for a dollar. Nearly all the members of the Sierra Club with whom I have talked favor putting an end to this political management. Only those people peculiarly interested in roads, franchises, and other little jobs are opposed to it, as far as I have found out, though even those would be benefited by the change through increase of travel.

Mr. Muir's suggestion of recession is one that should enlist the support of every public-spirited Californian. It is idle to waste time in considering the causes of the valley's deterioration. The scandal of the present situation is well known. The State accepted the trust from the nation in 1864, but its servants have not observed the fundamental condition of the cession. If the suggestion of recession is thought humiliating, it is not half so humiliating as the continuation of the scandal. And why should the suggestion be humiliating? Continually in every State systems of administration which do not work well are being changed. The commission system has not worked well: whereas, side by side, the system of national control has redeemed the National Park—the very sources of the Yosemite waterfalls. Why should not this treasure of nature have the same admirable protection?

One word in conclusion: if recession is to be accomplished at the next meeting of the California legislature, its advocates must organize and bestir themselves now. If Mr. Muir is not cordially supported in this effort to redeem the valley and remove a blot upon the State, let not Californians any longer boast of public spirit or resent the charge of absorption in material progress.

The New Olympic Games.

It is not alone in the United States that a reaction has set in against the excesses of athletics. Other countries recognize that the enthusiasm has gone too far, that too much energy has been thrown into play, that brutality has been fostered, and that honor has often been put at a discount in the worship of mere success. Realizing the true value of sport in its widest extension, and hoping to develop and strengthen an international sentiment in support of fairness and moderation, a number of prominent men of various nationalities have set on foot a series of standard and periodic contests to which all the world may contribute. These have already received the name of the New Olympic Games. The first of the series is to be held at Athens during the Greek Eastertide, from the fifth to the fifteenth of April; and if it shall awaken sufficient interest, others will be held at intervals of four years in Paris, London, and New York successively.

The movement began in France, and was largely due to the initiative of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, general secretary of the French Athletic Union. By his exertions a congress of delegates from the leading nationalities, most of them representing amateur associations of importance, met in the Sorbonne during May, 1894. Germany alone of the great peoples sent no representative, but that was due, we believe, to accident and not to intention. The meeting was held under the presidency of Baron de Courcel, now French ambassador in London, and was approved by men famous in public life from all countries, including Germany. The result

of its proceedings was in brief the enactment of stringent regulations for the conduct of those who claim to be amateurs, and the appointment of a committee to inaugurate a series of international contests for such persons in all sports. President Cleveland has expressed his interest by accepting the honorary chairmanship of the American committee.

The leaders of this movement have done well to adopt the name Olympic Games. When Western civilization was confined to Greece the participating nationalities were Greek, but the event was international and made for international harmony; the name is invaluable by its reminiscences, and the great territorial expanse of Western civilization pays a just tribute to the international and democratic sport of ancient times in adopting its nomenclature for the modern counterpart. Here, indeed, lies the real importance of the enterprise. It has been generally remarked that the drift of our democratic age is either international or anti-national. The frequent international contests in sport reflect and typify the tendency. Those who believe that the nation, next to the church and the family, is the most beneficent of social organisms must struggle to substitute international for anti-national in the democratic feeling of our time; and any enterprise, however tentative, which looks in that direction deserves sympathy and support. The members of the international committee are not ashamed to be idealists; and they hope, as M. de Coubertin has said, that a well-regulated, honorable athleticism will be a factor not only in a wholesome muscular development of humanity, but in cultivating the finer sentiments of universal brotherhood and social peace. Ignorance is the mother of suspicion and hate; the better our acquaintance the larger our forbearance.

It is to be regretted that there is no prospect of participation in the coming sports by large numbers of Americans. This is due to the distance, the unwonted season, and our consequent inability to send our best athletes. We are informed, however, that the United States will have a few worthy representatives. Apparently our amateurs have not realized just what they owe to their country, and some have not yet learned that dishonor lies not in being beaten, but in refusing to struggle. The prospects are that there will be a considerable concourse of American spectators. It will awaken strange and important sensations in citizens of almost the newest Western nation to sit where the ancient Athenians sat. The contests in horsemanship will take place in the cavalry school, those in target-shooting at the government range, those in fencing and wrestling in the fine rotunda of the Zappeion, those of a nautical character on the Bay of Phalerum; but the most important, the historical representatives of the old Olympic sports, those which we designate as gymnastic and athletic, will take place in the stadium, hoary with age, and suggestive of all that has been most enduring along the whole central course of secular human history.

The readers of *THE CENTURY* will be interested to learn that these contests will be the subject of a paper in this magazine by M. de Coubertin, with drawings by Mr. Castaigne, which will derive additional attractiveness by comparison with the scenes graphically reconstructed by his pencil in the present number.