

**PHYSICAL TRAINING: A FULL
REPORT OF THE PAPERS AND
DISCUSSIONS OF THE
CONFERENCE HELD IN BOSTON
IN NOVEMBER, 1889**

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Physical Training: A Full Report of the Papers and Discussions of the Conference Held in Boston in November, 1889 by Isabel C. Barrows

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ISABEL C. BARROWS

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REPORTED AND EDITED BY ISABEL C. BARROWS.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE Conference in the interest of Physical Training which took place in Boston November last, a full report of which is herewith presented, was held in pursuance of the following call:—

“A Conference in the interest of Physical Training will be held in Huntington Hall, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 29 and 30, 1889. . . .

“The object of this Conference is to place before educators different systems of gymnastics, and to secure discussion of the same, with a view to clearly ascertaining the needs of schools, and determining how they may best be met.

“The Conference will be presided over by William T. Harris, LL.D., United States Commissioner of Education. . . .

“Many prominent educators have signified their intention of being present, and a cordial invitation is extended to all who are interested in this important subject.”

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First Session.

PHYSICAL TRAINING.

A CONFERENCE in the Interest of Physical Training was held at Huntington Hall, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 29 and 30, 1889. William T. Harris, United States Commissioner of Education, presided. In opening the Conference, Dr. Harris said:

We open this morning a Conference devoted to the consideration of physical exercises for the development of the body. Physical training, I take it, is a part of the subject of hygiene in its largest compass, which includes dietary and digestive functions, and matters of rest and repose as well as matters of muscular training. We wish to discuss physical training in view of hygiene, and to avoid, if we can, all narrow interpretation of our subject. The advantage of such a Conference as this is that extremes come together; and, by comparison of views, each one learns to supplement his own deficiencies. We shall all be delighted to find new phases of the subject. Hygiene wishes to make the most of the body for human purposes,—not for animal purposes, but for *human* purposes. Hygiene includes several departments, of which physical training is one.

I shall define physical training as the conscious or voluntary training of the muscular side of our system, which is the special side under the control of the will. Of course we understand that the vital processes go on without the will, and that this is an advantage,—it is better that they should remain involuntary. Of course the voluntary system has relations to the involuntary system, and this is one of the first questions which have been considered by persons who have thoroughly studied physical training. What can we do with our wills? What can we do with our muscles that shall help on the vital