

To the Athletes and all taking part
at Amsterdam
in the IXth Olympiad

It is a deep source of regret to me that illness prevents my being present. It is likely that I may be unable as well to attend the Xth Olympiad celebration at Los Angeles next time. I should wisely then take the present opportunity of bidding you farewell.

I beg that you will strongly and faithfully keep ever alive the flame of the renovated Olympic Spirit and maintain its necessary principles: first, the character of perfect equality between the four great categories of individual sports: athletics and gymnastics, self-defense, aquatic sports, equestrian sports ...

- *then the Art Competitions as associating with high muscular activity, the influence of sportsmanship on thought and sense of beauty,*
- *the oath of the athlete making the idea of honour a sort of corner-stone and leading thus to the only true as well as practical solution of the amateur problem.*
- *the use of the Olympic flag which assembles the colours of all the nations of the world and symbolizes five continents tied together by sport,*
- *the programme of the solemn opening and closing of the Games, not forgetting the final homage paid to the Hellenic ancestors,*
- *and finally the authority of the self-recruiting International Olympic Committee whose independent method of*

formation is the best guarantee that traditions will be maintained while it does not imply any necessary dictatorial intrusion on technical grounds.

I believe great tournaments such as football, lawn-tennis etc... should be held side by side with the Games but somewhat independently while the Games proper should retain as their primary object the glorification of the individual athlete.

It is to be hoped that the quadriennial celebration of the Olympiads will help in giving the muscular life of young men a sort of rythmical character and thus defend the athlete against himself. It is highly desirable that he and his brother-gymnast should be no longer separated by prejudices and misunderstanding as is the case, more or less by fault of their respective managers.

Personnally I think the Modern Pentathlon ought to be competed for under the rules I laid down when I had it started. As to the admission of women to the Games, I remain strongly against it. It was against my will that they were admitted to a growing number of competitions.

Olympism passed through the great war without even a shake. I am confident it would not prove less solid in case of social troubles. At any rate, the corporative tendencies of our times are by no means anti-olympic. I noted with pleasure the workmen's acceptance of Olympic principles and spirit. Surely university students will be led to do the same. The great point is that, every-where everyone from adolescent to adult, would cultivate and spread the true sport spirit made of spontaneous loyalty and chivalrous impartiality.

Once again, I beg to thank those who have followed me and given me some help in fighting a forty years war, not often easy and not always frankly fought.

Pierre de COUBERTIN