

# M.P.'S AND THEIR FADS.

By ALEXANDER MACKINTOSH.

It is strange that all great men are slaves to some fad or other, and our House of Commons gives many good instances of how nearly all our statesmen ride the hobby-horse. Mr. Skinner's caricatures explain themselves.

"HOBBIES" (quoth Mr. Brooke in "Middlemarch") "are apt to run away with us, you know," and he adds, "it doesn't do to be run away with." Many busy members of Parliament differ from that discursive-minded country gentleman. It is good for them, they think, to be "run away with" by a fad or hobby. There is at least one member of the House of Commons, an Irishman, who shares the hobby of John Tipp, of Elia's South Sea House, but unless he indulges in Strads, his foible for the fiddle

of the gentlemen who have seats at present at St. Stephen's may be inclined to agree with that opinion. Others think



MR. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN.

need not be dear. It has been said that the most expensive hobby in the world is standing for Parliament. Not a few



MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

that fancy farming is still more expensive; some have shared Sir Walter Scott's experience of building and planting; a few have found how dear a hobby it is to run a newspaper. But that which is a mere fad in the onlooker's eye may be serious business in the mind of the faddist. There are many men who object to the application of the term "fad" to their cherished nostrums. Among such are vegetarians and advocates of universal arbitration. It is not with these that we are concerned, but rather with hobbies that members ride—sometimes to death—for their own amusement.

Most notorious among members' fads is Mr. Chamberlain's devotion to the orchid. Day after day his coat is adorned

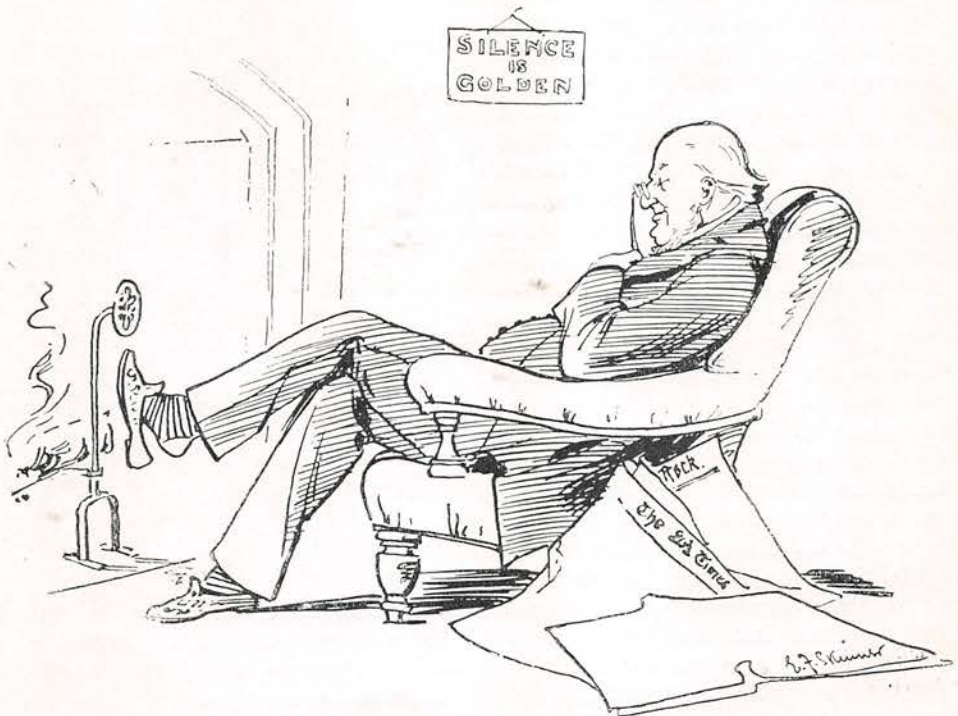
with the flower, sometimes with one for the morning and another for the evening. A gallant Admiral displays a fine specimen now and again, but it is pre-eminently with Mr. Chamberlain's name that the orchid's Parliamentary fame is linked. For many years he has indulged in this hobby, remaining true to it through all the changes of his political life. Not even his worst enemy could say that to this thing he is "constant never." One could no more think of him deserting the orchid than of his abandoning the single eye-glass—or Mr. Jesse Collings. In his thirty greenhouses are many flowers, but the orchid is the undisputed favourite, and to it a considerable number of the houses are devoted. There are thousands of specimens, including many hybrids of the Colonial Minister's own rearing. Some of the most beautiful which he wears in dress debates resemble butterflies; his favourites are Cattleyas and hybrid Dendrobiums. If this is not an aggressive fad—as some persons would describe anti-vaccination—neither can it be

regarded as unpretentious. On the contrary, it glories in being seen, and boasts, sometimes, of its costliness. As much as



"DIZZY."

three hundred guineas has been paid for an orchid. A Paris paper amused its readers some years ago with a story of a British statesman who, finding in the French capital a rare and beautiful orchid, bought it for a large sum and then crushed



SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.

it under foot because he possessed one of that sort and wished nobody else to have another. This was, of course, a pretty Parisian invention. Mr. Chamberlain does not ride his hobby to extravagance. Nor does he keep it for his own exclusive use. In his son, Mr. Austen, he has an imitator who sometimes sports the orchid as well as the eye-glass, although the young man's own fancy, it is reported, turns to the farming of a bit of land adjoining Highbury.



MR. GLADSTONE.

Statesmen's fads might form an interesting chapter in personal history. What was Disraeli's? Not the growing of primroses nor the rearing of peacocks, but rather the writing of novels and the display of Imperialism. All the world knows what was Mr. Gladstone's lifelong hobby. In his heart he may have been as proud of his skill in felling trees as of his additions to the Statute-Book. Sir William Harcourt's fad, if one may say so without political prejudice, is to seclude himself in the New Forest when he is most looked for by the public. "I am one of those," wrote Leigh Hunt, "that delight in a fireside." Sir William Harcourt's affection for his own fireside is regarded as a fad by politicians whose domestic inclinations are less fully developed. The "brave and bimetallic Balfour" stands at the head of those members whose hobbies are outdoor games. Lawn-tennis formerly shared his affection with Handel, and more recently the bicycle has almost run away with him. Golf, however, is his favourite fad. His devotion to it has made the game fashionable in England, and has increased its popularity even north of the Tweed. It is a game that knows no seasons. His colleagues may be hunting or yachting, deer-stalking or pheasant-shooting, but Mr. Balfour plays golf spring and autumn, summer and winter. During the Parliamentary Session he snatches a Saturday afternoon for a round at Tooting; when he goes to the seaside

to deliver a political speech his host arranges a match on the nearest links; on his way to Balmoral he has had a game between trains at Aberdeen; and every autumn he hurries to North Berwick, where for a month or two he plays almost every day and all day. His zest as a player is sportsmanlike. He learned the game in a thorough manner, and has pursued it with an assiduity worthy even of so good a cause. Some golfers are always duffers, but Mr. Balfour's play has steadily improved, and he has twice won the Parliamentary handicap.

The Order-Book of the House of Commons is a monument of legislative fads; there are some even on the Statute-Book. Proportional representation is the fad of a few members, bimetallism of others. Some find a fad in anti-opium or the local veto, worthy objects which, when pressed out of season, become tiresome. Telephones are Mr. Provand's fad, and Mr. Arthur O'Connor's is in the rules of



MR. ARTHUR BALFOUR.

the House. Mr. James Lowther's steadfast adherence to Protection through good and ill report is smiled at as a political whim, and another member is laughed at because he has "conventual establishments" on the brain. Mr. Jesse Collings's

cry for three acres and a cow was regarded at first as a fad, but ceased to be such when taken up by politicians of both parties. One of the purest Parliamentary fads is that of Mr. Cuthbert Quilter, who annually ballots for a Bill to promote the purity of beer. Whether he would drink it himself is doubtful, but pure beer cannot be mentioned in the House without the thoughts and glances of members turning towards Mr. Quilter.

A hobby with interesting results was pursued for several Sessions by Mr. Martin, a London banker and member for Mid-Worcestershire. Mr. Martin devoted the spare time of a busy man to obtaining the autographs of his Parliamentary colleagues. In a couple of dumpy volumes he placed miniature photographs of the members with brief chronicles of their careers, and opposite each record appears the autograph. It was in the last Parliament chiefly that Mr. Martin pursued this pleasant hobby, leaving the volumes with the attendant at the foot of the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery, and catching members as they went in and out. Though a pleasant, it was also an arduous fad. Mr. Martin personally knew only a small number of the 670 members, and it was difficult to hunt them all up and seize them in a signing humour. The result, however, possesses permanent interest. Many hunters for autographs envy Mr. Martin his albums. He will have to guard them closely in order to prevent the famous names from being cut out. The only

no importance flatly refused to sign the book—namely, Mr. "Jimmy" Caldwell. For this omission Mr. Martin may console

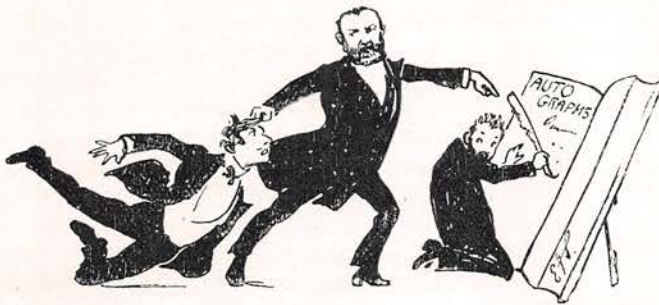


MR. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

himself. The album finishes at York with a caricature of a barrister in wig and gown, beside the much esteemed name of Frank Lockwood.

Another interesting hobby is that of Sir Benjamin Stone, a member for Birmingham. Sir Benjamin, whose business is that of a practical chemist, is an enthusiast in photography. He has travelled much, written books on his travels, and illustrated his books. Sir Benjamin's hobby has been turned to account in the Palace of Westminster, where his camera may be seen during the Session in many nooks and corners.

He has handed over to the British Museum, as the nucleus of a new record department, photographs of one hundred members,



MR. MARTIN.

notable signature wanting is that of Mr. Gladstone: to obtain his autograph was always difficult. One member of

taken on the Terrace by the side of the Thames, and a similar number of exquisitely printed views of the most interesting features of both Houses. All the members whose photographs have gone to the Museum were taken on the same stone on the Terrace, so that the surroundings in each case were identical. In the course of his self-imposed labour, in which he keeps an assistant busy, Sir Benjamin has brought some strange things to light. At Westminster Abbey he unearthed an old box, which was found to contain Exchequer tallies of great antiquity and interest, and in the Houses of Parliament, also, his prying camera has revealed even to those best acquainted with the building some unfamiliar features.

If Mr. Augustine Birrell has a fad, it is Dr. Johnson. The word is not to be

the great Doctor, if he lived in the days of the Boswells of monthly magazines, might have learned that he had more than



THE LATE SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD.



COLONEL SAUNDERSON.

found in Johnson's own Dictionary, but, like the Bourgeois Gentilhomme who spoke prose for forty years without knowing it,

one fad. Some men have great hobbies. Sir Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, for instance, plays with the Empire. Happiest, however, are they who find fads in small things or in occupations far outside the ordinary business of their lives. Colonel Saunderson paints; Sir Frank Lockwood, with impartial hand, caricatured friends and opponents. His hobby never failed to amuse wearied members. It was interesting to watch one of his sketches travelling from hand to hand along the front bench, honourable gentlemen behind peeping over right honourable shoulders to see the caricature. Sometimes it passed to the second bench, at other times it slipped into the pocket of one of the leaders. Lord George Hamilton's fad is destructive. It is his habit when seated in the House to take a sheet of paper and carefully cut it into small pieces. There are members who write poetry. Sir Wilfrid Lawson has for many years been addicted to this innocent amusement. The Muse visits him on a back bench, where he scribbles his inspired lines on a copy of the Orders of the Day or any scrap of paper at hand. Of course, they are "picked up" by somebody who

does not know their authorship, but who, recognising their political beauty, sends them to a sympathetic paper with the result that the genial teetotal baronet blushes twenty times in a Session to find himself famous.

In the poet's realm Sir Wilfrid has recently met a rival in the member for Gateshead—he of stalwart frame and great shaggy head. Mr. Allan has challenged criticism with the publication of his poems. Some lines in a newspaper on the storming of Dargai by the Gordon Highlanders may give an idea of his style—

Not a voice spake in despair;  
Not a look of fear or care;  
Not a coward heart was there—  
'Mid the Gordon Highlanders.

To a Newcastle paper he recently contributed a poem entitled "Jack shall be King of the Sea," from which the following is taken—

The flag that cowed the roving Dane,  
And shattered Gallia's might  
Tho' leagued with proud and haughty Spain  
Waves still in glory's light;  
As in triumphant days of old,  
Its laurels bright appear,  
While from the hearts of seamen bold  
This song salutes the ear:—  
The soldier may be lord on land,  
And brave in battle be,  
While Britain's sons man British guns,  
Jack shall be King at Sea.  
Hurrah! Hurrah!

It is, perhaps, in games and sports that the majority of members find their hobbies—



MR. JAMES LOWTHER AND MR. HENRY CHAPLIN.

at least, such hobbies as are known outside the family circle. Mr. Chaplin and Mr. Lowther, not content with Bimetallism



SIR WILFRID LAWSON.

and Protection, fly to the Turf. Others are at their happiest when riding to hounds; a few seek delight in steeple-chasing. There is a large Parliamentary team of cricketers. Among these is Mr. Lyttelton, who can keep wicket to any colleague's bowling. Viscount Curzon has a partiality both for cricket and for music; and Mr. H. W. Forster is a crack golfer, as well as batsman. Lawn tennis also claims its devotees. Mr. Herbert Gladstone divides his affection between tennis and music, politics taking a back place. Sir Edward Grey, who loves the fresh air and the life of a country gentleman better even than the atmosphere of the House of Commons, has more than once won the amateur tennis championship. When Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs he was accustomed to devote part of one day a week to his favourite pastime, and it has been said that at the close of a game he remarked, "Now I have nothing to live for till next week." Sir Edward is an expert also in dry trout-fishing, and while a

member of the late Government he was caught poaching—inadvertence, of course—in a Devonshire stream. Many members have learned to play billiards as part of a liberal education. A few find in it their chief hobby. This was Mr. John Bright's favourite pastime. Mr. Fenwick, the miners' member, is fond of a game, though, as he confesses, he doesn't play particularly well. Mr. Bromley-Davenport has excelled as a football player, and Mr. Tennant, it has been said, skates like an angel.

A quiet rubber with a good partner is the hobby of a section of our legislators. Mr. W. E. Forster was very fond of whist. He would play dummy and even double dummy if a game could not otherwise be made up. A good story of Mr. Forster at the whist-table is told by Mr. James Payn. One afternoon, at a time when the Nationalists were jeering at him as "Buckshot," the statesman had won a good many rubbers from the novelist, and the latter looked resentfully at him for the partiality with which Fortune was treating him. "If it would be any satisfaction to you, my dear fellow," said Mr. Forster, with

chess-players. Mr. Parnell, the brother of the Irish "leader," Mr. Plunkett, and Mr. Atherley-Jones are some of the



MR. HERBERT GLADSTONE.

keenest. Chess is the only game—except, of course, the great political game—played at the House of Commons. Whig and Tory, Home Ruler and Unionist, forget their

partisan differences over the chess-board. At this game old Churchmen even would sit down with the late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh. Mr. Henniker Heaton is an enthusiast, but his fad is really the reform of the Post Office—a hopeless fad, other men think.

"I have no time for a hobby," says the hurried man who forgets that what makes Jack a dull boy may have the same effect on his senior. There are other people whose habits and hobbies shrink from observation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, for instance, keeps the curtain down on his personal life. If he has a fad it is not generally known, unless it be in his dislike of smoking, a practice which, in the well-fed, he regards as waste. Other men make a fad of smoking. Mr. Labouchere is not happy if he is deprived of a cigarette for more than an hour at a spell. Certain observers describe proportional representation as Mr. Courtney's fad. Others are inclined to think his fad lies in brown waistcoats. Mr. Curzon's hobby is travelling. Mr. Bryce's hobby is hill-climbing. Not content with the ascent of Ararat, he climbs every hill at home and abroad near which his fortunes take him. When at Aberdeen he varies speech-making to his constituents with trips to the hills in the county. Sir Howard Vincent is another member with a hobby: it is generally understood



SIR EDWARD GREY.

his humorous smile, "and a relief to your feelings to call me 'Buckshot,' do it." Among Parliamentarians of the present day there is a considerable company of

to be volunteering. He takes great interest in the Queen's Westminster, of which he is Colonel. All the doings and



MR. HENRY LABOUCHERE.

a dressy man. Certain other members excite the admiration of the tailoring and hosiery trades. It is their ambition to show off the newest tie, the smartest coat, the latest stripe in trousers. A wealthy member once boasted that he had thirty-six pairs of new trousers. Another member sets the fashion in hats; more than one devotes an ambitious mind to boots. Mr. "Bobby" Spencer's hobby was in the direction of high collars. Several new men have aspired to succeed him, but not one has achieved the same notoriety. "Costume," said Mr. Gladstone, "is a matter not without importance, and has given trouble to Speakers of the House of Commons." This remark was made apropos of the fear that Tennyson might wear a wide-awake in the Upper House. Mr. Gladstone may have been thinking of the invasion of the House of Commons by low hats and soft hats. One of the earliest innovators was Mr. Joseph Cowen, who could squeeze his soft "Kossuth" into

recreations of the corps enlist his sympathy. Some of his friends, however, say that volunteering is really the serious business of his life, and that his Parliamentary crusade against foreign prison-made goods is really his fad! Mr. Thomas Gibson Bowles's fad is to know everything, his particular hobby being navigation. How he

delights to fire at the very Civil Lord of the Admiralty a volley of seafaring words! In this respect he beats even Admiral Field, although he cannot vie with the Admiral in the seaman's gait.

There are many other fads. There are fads, for instance, in clothes. Mr. Coningsby Disraeli, who resembles his cele-



PROFESSOR BRYCE.



"BOBBY" SPENCER.

brated uncle in several points, sometimes attracts attention by the cut and colour of his garments. Mr. Courtney's brown waistcoats have already been mentioned. He appears in them at all seasons of the year. Yet Mr. Courtney cannot be called

his pocket. Old-fashioned gentlemen were inexpressibly shocked, and even in our own day Mr. Blake and Mr. Allan are regarded



as faddists because while sitting in the House they wear wide-awakes. Some men are fickle even in their fads. They like a change every year. "What's his latest fad?" is asked in their case with wonderment. But most of the hobbies mentioned have been lifelong. The list might be extended indefinitely. There are, for instance, the collectors. Mr. Aird collects pictures, and entertains artists, and Mr. Horniman collects antiquities, while Sir Henry Howorth writes letters to the *Times*; Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman reads French novels; Sir John Lubbock studies ants, bees, and wasps. And so on! These are "the feathers, chips, and straws of life" — almost all of them harmless

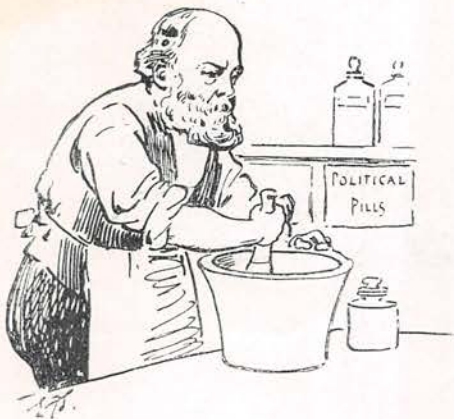
hobbies, some of them amusing, and a few useful. "Tis strange to see the humours of these men, These great aspiring spirits that should be wise." Well, they are not very foolish, after all; and no one except the faddist who is a bore grudges our legislators their peculiar fads and fancies.

While relating all the hobbies and fads of the members of the Lower House, perhaps it is excusable to men-

tion two notable figures in the House of Lords. Lord Salisbury makes chemistry his hobby, and probably his opponents think him more at home in his laboratory than in the Foreign Office; while Lord Rosebery owes a great deal of his popularity to his success on the racecourse.



MR. AIRD.



LORD SALISBURY.



LORD ROSEBERY.