ON RECREATIONS FOR GIRLS.

By Sir Benjamin Ward Richardson M.D., F.R.S.

The day is fast passing away when the common belief existed that women were, by nature, consigned to the monotony of indoor life and domestic care. Hector might still declaim to his Andromache—

"No more, but hasten to thy tasks at home,
To guide the spindle and direct the loom.
My glory summons to the martial scene;
The field of combat is the sphere for men."

Yet I doubt if he would be quietly listened to in these days, if the enemy were at the gate, for we have now an army of women who would fight by the side of their husbands and brothers if necessity called them. Within a very short space of time, within my own recollection, certainly, a change has been effected in respect to the cultivation of physical exercise amongst women that is historical in its character. My old and able teacher of anatomy, when I was a student, was persistent in his lesson that women were not capable of cultivation, physically, like men. He did not pretend that their ribs differed in number from those of men, indeed, from two fine skeletons, one of a woman, another of a man, he demonstrated that the sexes were alike, strictly, in respect to ribs, but in the matter of muscles he held they were not alike; a woman could not throw a cricket-ball as a man did; she could "chuck" it by an "underhand movement," but she could not fling it or pitch it. The muscles were not formed for the work. We know better now, for have we not a ladies' team, and does not the team do credit to the old English game?

Of course the argument of the old-school men was based on a fundamental error. They simply witnessed the phenomenon of deficient development from deficient exercise, and they mistook cause for effect. Except under special circumstances women are just as able as men to take part in recreative pursuits; they are as much benefited by such pursuits, and, if yielding wisely...

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and jealously to circumstances, they moderate their zeal as not to show too contemptuous a spirit in any contests in which they may be engaged, they add greatly and gracefully to the science of health and to the usefulness of life, by the new efforts a fair and long period of observation and experience.

Before entering into these details I would beg to remark that there are certain principles relating to recreation for women which, in a degree, stand alone, that is to say, while they apply to some extent to both sexes, they especially apply to the female sex.

First and foremost, these recreations are best adapted for women which do not interfere with the daily work of the household, and especially belong to the woman, duties and functions which cannot possibly be performed by men. One of the great dangers at the present time is that women, by their efforts to compete with men, to partake in recreative exercises, are given to forget the fact that, in general, they are born to do certain things better than men can do; if that is the case one should be prepared for one day becoming necessary that they should undertake special maternal duties, and that for home to home they must, within the sphere of home, display domestic talents, and do domestic work which comes exclusively under their control. They must remember, moreover, without thinking of giving up recreative pleasures and exercises on the pattern of the man, that they attempt part in recreation beyond a certain bound of natural womanly duties, is to pass into a sphere with which such duties are naturally incompatible.

In earlier days, in the world, extreme physical strength and power of resistance to natural forces, with skill to surmount great obstacles, with craft to overcome great difficulties, with courage to carry everything that may come in the way, with dispositions, in plain words, to fight and make level all that is in opposition, means a state of robustness which could have had harmony with those gentleman traits, attributes, and affections belonging to the birth and the care of the young and feeble. Mind and body go together, they are apt to grow in the same way under a more strenuous physical organisation is fully developed. The mental qualities of resolution and conflict are joined to the physical qualities should lead a beauty, resolution, and conflict, and it were something worse than crushing a fly on the wheel of a locomotive, to see the representative of pure manly attributes engrossed systematically in the nursery.

Secondly, those recreations are best for women which, according to the more refined spirit, are not vulgar or vulgarising qualities that vulgarise make the woman not only objectionable generally but objectionable specifically. They are not for her the destruction and training of children, male or female. Too often necessity makes mothers and women vulgar in their nature. Brought up in schools where the sentiment of habit are dominant, they reflect upon young and susceptible minds their own nature, and we look with pity if we are merciful, with disgust if we are not merciful, to see a brief spirit in imitation which follow on the rude patterns we would avoid in recreative pursuits.

Thirdly, the best recreations for women are those which make body to be equally developed, and to be, in development, as perfect as possible. This is another way of saying that recreations should lead to a beauty, and, if I am correct in my view, every recrea-

than should have this tendency. A man may say this without being supposed to betry the opposite sex, for beauty is a virtue as commendable to men as to women. What is more, it is of the highest importance "one must much solicit for one that should render the recreations for women specially agreeable to their tastes and inclinations, for women more than men love, naturally, beauty not only when they see it, but beauty as they know that in their own persons.

The cynical may laugh at hooks of fashion, and may consider them the height of folly, but they are the signs of beauty, or destroy that distinction which everyone recognises as between the beauty and the beast. We may call fashion the outward display, or if it can be confined to that which is only artificial for adorning the person; but let beauty extend to the person itself, let it not only be skin deep but more than skin deep, that is, belonging to the whole frame; then the worst cynic can say nothing that the world will believe, except that "beauty unadorned is adored the most."

There are recreations which lead to general beauty, and there are recreations which divert from general beauty. There are some recreations which are directed not only to the body, and others which, being opposed to natural law and often brought into action, deform rather than beautify, and, though fitted to the individual body, is the strength and quality of the body as a whole organisation. It is remarkable, moreover, how very little of divergence from harmony of action. The individual body will in young women both in form and function. This is most conspicuous in regard to form, and those artists least worthy in their delineations are those who are free from defect in form. I remember a most distinguished sculptor who produced in marble a beautiful woman, and the woman of a finest type; she seemed perfect when looked at in detail, but when it was glanced at from a distance, as one design, something wrong was detected in it. It ceased to be beautiful. The artist himself was conscious of some grievous fault, but did not see wherein it lay. At last a friendly anatomical eye coming fresh upon the subject, discerning the defect, if it may be called, it was a trifling matter, but it was everything; one small section of the body on one side was enlarged, and although a very trivial error comparatively speaking the defect, it would have been fatal if it had not been detected and removed. The removal completed the beauty of the whole design. It is the consistent most vividly a beauty of the human body from nature. Beauty, in unity, as dependent upon recreation should ever be a first consideration. The same is the case with regard to function. It is true that the body adapts itself to various errors, to various positions, to various disturbances. But that body is most perfect in which compensatory efforts are least required, because any compensation means an unnecessary effort, and an unnecessary effort means an expenditure of bodily power—two acts, when one might be sufficient.

**Typical recreations.**

The recreations of the English life open to women at the present time, and coinciding with the principles above narrated, is the question that now concerns us. In answering it, I propose to be as brief as possible, and in imitation which follow on the rude patterns we would avoid in recreative pursuits.

Walking is naturally the first exercise, and carried out correctly is, perhaps, the best of all, though it may be the most monotonous. Good walking is an art to be learned; it does not consist alone in keeping up a steady pressure; neither man nor woman is destined to walk more than four miles per hour, and the woman who achieves three and a half miles is excellent. The amount that should be done per day varies according to age and constitution; but even in tours six hours' walking out of the twenty-four is ample for women who are best trained. This would limit walking exercises for recreation to a distance of twenty-four miles a day at the best. In walking, brightness of the day and the proper level should be permitted. The breathing must be continually maintained, and should be always carried out by the nostrils, not by the mouth. The step should be light, but with a steady tread upon the heel. All impediments of long dresses should be laid aside, and the boot or shoe should never have a heel to it above half an inch in height. The boot should have a full-size across the fore part, so as to prevent the toes from being cramped, and the ankle should be left as free as possible. The shoe should parallel in fact, as largely as we strip of the old sandal principle, which, after all, has never been surpassed.

Swimming should be cultivated not only as a recreation but as a way of life. The body in recreation brings a larger number of muscles into play than swimming, and, barring accidents, I know of no exercise that more equally elevates and strengthens the bodily frame, as swimming. The dangers to be avoided in swimming are those incident to long diving, and to prolonged immersion in the water. I have seen more muscles of a beautiful young woman, from both these sources, from long immersion especially. So soon as it is found that the body of the swimmer is inclined to reappear in a warm glow on coming out of the water, is dark and cold with blue lips, goose-skin, chilliness and feebleness, the story is told that the observation has been too long, and has done injury.

Dancing properly carried out is one of the happiest and healthiest of recreations. Unfortunately, it has of late dropped into an absurd fashion of overwork and overstrain, in late hours, and in unwholesome atmospheres. Dancing should be cultivated as an outdoor exercise, it was in the olden times, and should consist, more than it does, of individual dancing than in couples, as in the waltz. Dancing is one of those recreations which especially excite the circulation of the blood, and are dangerously—when carried to extremes—the beat of the heart.

Lawn Tennis, which has become so essentially against effects in old age, all of recreations for women, in so far as healthy movement is concerned. Without excessive fatigue it brings into play all the great groups of muscles of the body, and it has the advantage that it trains specially the sense of sight, enabling the player to measure distances with exactitude as well as to become familiar with the most beautiful movement with quick exactitude. The objections to it are the accidents which sometimes happen from over exercise and from the strain and fatigue is induced from too prolonged indulgence in it as a pastime.

Cycling is unquestionably a good exercise for women, but it has its disadvantages and it does not equalise muscular movement. Carried too far, in fact, it leads to unbalanced development of the lower limbs, and may produce a condition of the knees which is with quick exactitude. The objection to it is the accidents which sometimes happen from over exercise and from the strain and fatigue is induced from too prolonged indulgence in it as a pastime.
LIKE A WORM I’ THE BUD.

CHAPTER XI.

"A VIEUX COMPTES NOUVELLES DEPES,"

"SO GOOD, AND THEN DO IT AGAIN."

"Hum! so would I!" said Mr. Glyn; "but you would not flog me. When can George come to me?"

"After Christmas, sir."

"Then we will consider that point as settled, and I am sure you will let this little affair die a natural death. The poor foundling is saved after much danger, and nobody is the worse for it. May I see Miss Vaughan?"

"Certainly, sir," said the master, and left the board-room. He soon returned with Mara.

"I will not keep you, Roderick," said Mr. Glyn, and the little man went away.

"Excuse me, Miss Vaughan, but as the guardians are gone, and I have a little time to take the liberty of asking to see you, I must not inquire how this affair came about. I am afraid I will annoy your generous exertions."

"Thank you, Mr. Glyn, I am quite well. Now I have the opportunity, may I thank you for your very heart for what you did for those poor children. God will bless you. You saved his life—Ivor’s. Oh! Mr. Glyn!"

"Do not name that. I am glad to have been the instrument of good. But, Miss Vaughan you will be more careful in future, not—not on the children’s account, but on your own. Your heroism is great, but caution is the better guide; and—and—you understand, I am sure."

"Perfectly," said Mara, colouring. "I was careless, and oh! I have been punished enough."

"Why were the children so far away from you? and, may I ask, what brought Miss Herbert on the scene?"

"She was going over the beach, and seeing me, came and sat down by me," said Mara."

"Oh, indeed! you are old friends, I fancy?"

"Yes, and true ones. Angharad never forsakes a friend."

"Perhaps she kept your attention engaged while the children strayed."

"Possibly," said Mara, shortly, remembering what the conversation had been.

"Your father was at the Board to-day, and asked me about last night," said Mr. Glyn.

"He is waiting for me now," said Mara; "I have been so engaged that I have not yet seen him."

"One word more," said Miss Vaughan. This word was the one Mr. Glyn had wanted to say from the first. "You must not make a favourite of Ivor. They gossip about it."

"Mr. Glyn said, leaving Mara in much perplexity.

No sooner was he gone than Mr. Vaughan came into the room. He kissed Mara more affectionately than usual, and she returned his embrace with unaccustomed warmth.

"Are you ill, child?" he said anxiously. "You might have lost your life in that wild walk over the cliffs."

"I am well, father. Captain Herbert saved me from danger, if there was any."

At the hated name Mr. Vaughan’s temporary show of feeling was again clouded.

"I thought of you and Nanno, father, as the night came on, and I heard the sea roaring beneath me," said Mara, simply.

"When you will avoid such adventures in future by confiding to us," said Mr. Vaughan.

"I cannot, I cannot," was the reply; "I must not leave the children."

"Your anxiety about them is praiseworthy, Mara, and I am glad to hear that you do your duty by them. But your duty to your father should be first. You rarely come home now. Nanno is lonely without you, and I feel that I ought to have two daughters."

The stress on the ought roused Mara.

"You have, father. I will come at Christmas, if I may. But oh! do not ask me to leave the children."

"I am punished indeed!" said Mr. Glyn.