

Doctors' Diversions.

SIR WILLIAM MACCORMAC, BART., SIR MICHAEL FOSTER, M.P., MR. R. BRUDENELL CARTER, F.R.C.S., DR. FARQUHARSON, M.P., SIR CHARLES CAMERON, BART., M.P., SIR JOSEPH EWART, PROF. CLIFFORD ALLBUTT, SIR CHARLES GAGE-BROWN, AND SIR PETER EADE ON THEIR PHYSICAL RECREATIONS.

BY FREDERICK DOLMAN.

FOR many years past leading members of the medical profession have strongly advocated the claims of physical recreation from the hygienic point of view. Do the doctors practise what they preach? With a view to throwing some light upon this question, I have had a series of unprofessional consultations with representative members of "the Faculty" as to their own recreations and the physical benefit that has been derived from them.

I first approached Sir William MacCormac, the eminent surgeon whose name the South African War has made familiar to all our readers. Sir William was not able to give me an interview, but sent a letter which, presenting a philosophic view of the subject, may well be given first place.

"The best way," wrote Sir William, "to secure physical well-being is to employ to advantage not only your body, but your mind. The work of these two must be co-ordinated, for they react on one another for good or for ill. In the hurry of life and the quest after success one or both of these desiderata may be neglected, and sooner or later ill consequences will follow. Health, both of mind and body, is promoted by an adequate amount of outdoor exercise, and self-restraint and self-control are needful in everything, in recreation as in everything else besides. The particular form which this may take is a matter of inclination. I, personally, like golf because it gives sufficient and agreeable exercise and is a complete mental distraction."

Vol. xx.—41.

Sir Michael Foster, M.P., whom I saw one morning in the rooms of the Royal Society, is, I believe, as well known in the horticultural as in the medical world. He is an enthusiastic amateur gardener, and his collection of irises is probably unique in this country.

"Gardening," he says, "has been my one hobby since I was a boy. At Huntingdon Grammar School I believe I gave some promise as a cricketer, but I did not play after I was about sixteen or seventeen, when I began to prepare myself for the medical profession. When I started in practice in

Huntingdon I took to gardening, as I found that this recreation did not at all interfere with my professional work. It was a comparatively small garden, but even in a small garden you can get a good deal of exercise and enjoyment.

"Year by year the pleasures of gardening have grown upon me. I have now about two acres at my home near Cambridge, and if I had nothing else to do I believe that my garden would give me sufficient interest in life."

"Do you take part in the actual manual work of the garden, Sir Michael?" (Sir

Michael Foster is sixty-four.)

"Oh, yes. I have made a special hobby of the cultivation of the iris; and, with regard to my iris-beds, I do all the work from beginning to end, the digging included. I do not allow the gardener to touch them on any account, apart from watering them. I work chiefly at the week-ends, which I generally spend at Ninewells, and when I happen to be at home at other times usually pass the afternoon in the garden."



SIR WILLIAM MACCORMAC.
From a Photo. by Elliott and Fry.



From a Photo. by] SIR MICHAEL FOSTER, M.P. [George Neumes, Ltd.

After this statement it is evident that Sir Michael Foster, with his well-built figure, ruddy complexion, and cheerful manner, is a living witness to the hygienic value of gardening. But it has a drawback from this point of view, which the ex-President of the British Association proceeds to mention.

"I have a constitutional tendency to lumbago, and, as I believe doctors generally will tell you, gardening is unfavourable to lumbago, because it causes one to lean over so much."

"This is on the debit side—what would you put on the credit side of gardening?"

"First, it takes you quite away from everything else—in the garden you can think only of your flowers. It gives a new zest to life—makes you want to live—and I suppose this must be put to the credit side. I carry out a good many experiments in hybridizing, and some of these experiments cannot come to fruition for ten or fifteen years—one becomes anxious to live as long to see the results. It goes without saying that, unlike some sports,

there is no physiological reason why one shouldn't stick to gardening all one's life. It can be enjoyed, too, pretty well all the year round without the risks to health that sports pursued some distance from home may involve. If you get wet you can go indoors at once and change your clothes; if you get hot and liable to chill, when no longer moving about, you can immediately take refuge in a warm room."

Sir Joseph Ewart, M.D., of Brighton, had a somewhat novel recreation to tell me of when I met him one sunny morning in Old Steyne Garden. This was haymaking and harvesting.

"I make a point of going to my country home, in Cumberland, some time in July and August," he says, "in order that I may take my place with the labourers in the fields. It is splendid exercise, and has the advantage of taking place only in fine weather. I put on a woollen shirt, take off my coat and vest, and work all day among the men. I can do as good a day's work as any of the hired hands, but"—and Sir Joseph's eye twinkled—"I have not yet received a day's pay from my brother-in-law, who manages the farm."

"Isn't it rather severe exertion for a townsman?"

"Well, you see, it was what I was brought up to. My early life was spent in the country, and during the summer it was always a delight to me to take part in the field work. At school we had any amount of football—playing it every day during the summer—but no cricket. In India—I was over twenty-five years, you know, in India—I took part occasionally in a cricket match, but my regular exercise was horse-riding. All one's exercise has to be taken, of course, in the early morning, and riding is about the best and most convenient.

"At one time or another I have also done a good deal of fishing. Fishing is a better exercise than is often supposed. The good angler always stands. He often has to move from one spot to another, and the throw of the line brings into play the muscles of the arms. But fishing is certainly not favourable to rheumatism—the best catches are to be



SIR JOSEPH EWART, M.D.
From a Photo. by T. Donovan & Son, Brighton.

obtained, of course, after heavy rain—and for this reason I have not done much in recent years, although there are one or two good streams near Brighton, and some excellent cod is to be caught a mile or two from my Cumberland home.”

“Haymaking and harvesting can be indulged in only during two or three months. What is your all-the-year-round exercise in Brighton, Sir Joseph?”

“Walking. Walking as a recreation has gone out of favour since cycling came in, but I feel sure that its popularity will revive. There is nothing to beat walking, in my opinion, from the health point of view, especially in the early morning. At this time of the year I am always up by half-past five, and after a cup of tea and a biscuit have a ramble of three or four miles over the downs. Nothing could be more enjoyable and exhilarating.”

“And in winter?”

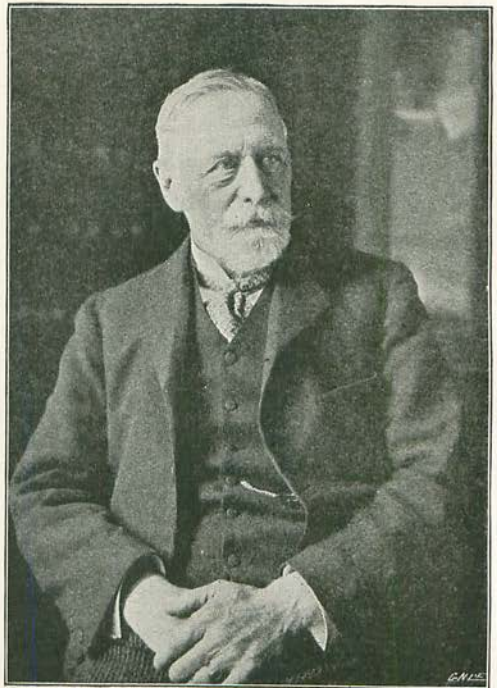
“Well, in winter I am not out so early—never before it is light. But if the weather is reasonably fine I have my walk all the same. My recreation, you see, in this way does not interfere with my day’s work. On the other hand, if I played golf, for instance, I should often give up the best part of a day to the sport without getting more physical benefit from it than from my regular morning walk.”

Reverting to the subject of his agricultural recreations, Sir Joseph reminded me that machinery had much reduced the labour of both harvesting and haymaking. It was not

an unusual thing for townsmen in the North of England to go out into the country and take part in these rural labours for sheer fun and enjoyment, and he did not see why the practice should not become general throughout the kingdom. The impression of “fitness” which Sir Joseph Ewart gives, at the age of sixty-nine, and after his arduous Indian life, would certainly commend the suggestion. Sir Joseph, like most Anglo-Indians in England, has suffered occasionally from the after-effects of malaria, and as an authority on this subject his professional judgment is in much request, I believe, among returned Civil servants, Army officers, etc., and their families.

Dr. Clifford Allbutt, F.R.S., who combines a consulting practice at Cambridge with the Professorship of Physic in the University, is an enthusiastic member of the Alpine Club.

“For twenty-three years,” he tells me in the study of “St. Radegund’s,” Chaucer Road, “with only one exception, I had a month’s climbing in Switzerland. But about ten years ago circumstances brought my Alpine career to a close. I fancied I was getting too old, and also a little too stout for climbing—on my last visit I found that I was obliged sometimes to ask for a helping



PROFESSOR CLIFFORD ALLBUTT.
From a Photograph.

hand, and so I thought it was time to give up. I might not have given it up all the same but for the death of an old friend and holiday companion—Kennedy, one of the best half-dozen climbers of his time, under whose tutelage I did my first climbs when I was about thirty.”

“Did you find that this month in Switzerland set you up for the year?”

“Oh, I generally managed to get a week on the Westmorland and Cumberland mountains at Christmas and Easter. But except for these holidays my profession left me no leisure for physical recreation. This is the great advantage of Switzerland to a man who ordinarily has no time for day-to-day exercise—it furnishes him with a reserve of health and vigour as no other holiday does. Of course, a doctor's life is not so sedentary as that of some other professional men, such as barristers and solicitors; but I remember that in the exceptional year I spoke of I missed my Alpine holiday very much. I believe it took me two or three years to recover arrears, so to speak.

“Of course, the Alps are not equally beneficial to everybody. If you wish to get real physical good out of the exercise and the air, unequalled, as I believe, for its hygienic qualities, you must use some amount of knowledge and prudence. For instance, it is a common thing for people to start out early in the morning, do a long day's climbing on very little food, and then return famished to a heavy *table d'hôte*—with deplorable results. My rule, on a climb, is to eat little and often—filling my pocket with biscuits, chocolates, and raisins, taking a moderate meal at night, and fully satisfying the appetite engendered by the day's exercise at breakfast on the following morning. Although I am not a teetotaler, I never touch alcohol whilst climbing, and I have beaten men of superior physique, simply because they had taken a small glass of cherry brandy. You may take your glass of whisky or champagne, as usual, after your return at

night, but during the day ‘no alcohol’ is, I am sure, the best rule.”

As Professor Allbutt's words a few moments later suggested, there is enough intoxication in the air itself on the Swiss mountains.

“What has taken the place of Alpine climbing in your life, Professor Allbutt?”

“Nothing could take the place of it—no other recreation has the same intoxicating joy. But during the last ten years I have got my physical exercise mainly from cycling. I ride every day to and from the town, and occasionally take a few hours' run into the country around Cambridge, which is exceptionally good for cycling. During my holidays I have taken several short tours, doing probably forty miles a day on an average, but stopping *en route* a good deal whenever there was anything interesting to be seen. I have not yet taken my machine abroad with me, but I should much like to have a run through Normandy.”

“And you have a very good opinion of cycling from the hygienic point of view?”

“Yes, I have. As you may suppose, Cambridge is a great place for cycling, and I have come across only one case in which it was productive of harm—a young man of rather delicate physique who had heart weakness. He used to take long rides every Saturday with his wife, a young and healthy woman, who probably set the pace. I had to veto these rides, and now he is much better and able to use his machine again for short distances. Of course, with all sports involving long strain there is the same risk. In cricket or football the strain may be severe, but is not prolonged, whilst rowing may be said to occupy an intermediate position in this respect. But I don't think cycling is such a good recreation for young men, because there is practically no element of physical danger about it, and it is physical danger in their sport which develops the courage of men.”



SIR CHARLES CAMERON, BART., M.P.
From a Photo. by Bassano, Old Bond Street, W.

Sir Charles Cameron, Bart., M.P., with

whom I had a talk as we paced the terrace of the House of Commons for ten minutes one afternoon, takes a catholic view of sports. "All sports are good," he declared, "if taken in moderation. There is no doubt that some amount of physical harm is done nowadays by excess." His own sports, Sir Charles had previously informed me by letter, are riding, cycling, and driving, this order indicating his degree of preference.

"I am very fond of riding, but my horse, a fine Arab, has become too old to carry me, and it is rather difficult to get accustomed to a new steed. The consequence is that I now cycle a good deal, although I did not mount a machine until five or six years ago. As regards driving—it can be regarded, of course, only as an adjunct to other physical exercise. It gives you the fresh air and exercises your arms a little. I have had a little shooting, but do not consider myself a shot; and at school (at St. Andrews) I played golf a little, but have never taken to the game since."

I asked Sir Charles, who is sixty-four, what he considered his maximum cycling run, having regard to physical benefit.

"From thirty to thirty-five miles," he replied. "But this is largely a question of training; the mistake which most people make with regard to all sports is to attempt too much when they are not in training. A man who is in good training can do with impunity what at another time might entail serious injury. In cycling the great thing is to have a fairly clear, dry road—the run I usually take when in town is to Richmond and back. As you suggest, riding through crowded London streets, especially when the road is muddy, must often involve some amount of tension and nervous strain.

"I can get a good deal of exercise, you know," Sir Charles remarks, as we return to the House, "walking up and down the terrace."

Another well-known Parliamentary medico, Dr. Robert Farquharson, the member for West Aberdeenshire, is credited by the bio-

graphical dictionaries with one recreation, viz., shooting. After a few minutes' conversation with him, however, at his house in Bayswater, I found that he could speak from personal experience of several exercises, although, as he admitted, the greatest amount of enjoyment during his life had been derived from his gun. This might well be, considering that the doctor had the exceptional good fortune—for a professional man—to inherit about 16,000 acres in the county of Aberdeen.

"Shooting," said Dr. Farquharson, who has been a surgeon in the Coldstream Guards, and is now a member of the staff at St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington, "is the one sport I have had all my life—I have handled a gun since boyhood. At school we had none of the games that are now so universally played. The Edinburgh Academy, which

I attended, had not even a playground at that time—only a room with sanded floor for such recreation as could be obtained. Consequently I never learned to play football or cricket, and had really no physical exercise beyond walking to and from the school. But I had the shooting during my holidays in the country."

"And you've had it every year since?"

"Yes. I don't think I have missed a season on the moors. Shooting gives you plenty of walking, without any feeling of fatigue, and usually in pure, bracing air. True,

it is not an all-the-year-round sport, but in one form or other it can be obtained from August to December. I suppose it is cruel—especially in the case of poor shots—and I am not hypocritical enough to plead that but for sport some species would become extinct. You have, perhaps, read Professor Freeman's book on 'The Morality of Field Sports.' Well, it seems to me that the only reply which can be made is somewhat similar to that which is made in regard to drink. Three men went into a public-house, one declaring that he wanted some whisky because he was cold, the second because he was wet, whilst the third frankly admitted that he wanted it because he liked it. We shoot because we like it.



DR. FARQUHARSON.

From a Photo. by George Neumes, Limited.

"At any rate, I know nothing which can be urged against shooting as a sport from the hygienic point of view. I tried cycling some years ago, but soon gave it up. It seems to me that once a man learns to cycle he never walks afterwards if he can help it; and as for his enjoying the scenery, every cyclist I pass on a country road has his head bent down and his attention concentrated on the road before him."

"You believe in walking, Dr. Farquharson?"

"Yes, I try to get some every day even in London, frequently walking from here to the House of Commons. And unlike most people, who say that they must have an 'object' before them, I can walk for the sake of walking, enjoying the mere physical exercise. But in London I find three or four miles every day ample—it is a mistake to walk in London, with the noise and the traffic, as you would in the country. I have recently taken up golf, and that will give me plenty of walking during the time of the year when I am in London. Golf is a fine game for exercising all the limbs and bringing out the chest, but of course I have started it too late in life to do much with it. However, I find that I am not the only duffer at the game, and I managed to beat an ex-Cabinet Minister on the links at Mitcham the other day. On the other hand, I am now too old for lawn tennis, of which I was rather fond at one time. As a rule I don't think tennis should be played much after forty—degeneracy has then set in, and one's muscles are becoming too stiff for the game to be advantageously played.

"Before I became a member of the House of Commons," continued Dr. Farquharson, "I kept a hunter at Leighton Buzzard and occasionally had a day with the hounds. But although I enjoyed hunting, I don't think I got enough benefit out of it to justify the expense—for hunting, of course, is very expensive. I was rather

fond of roller-skating, too, when this came into vogue a few years ago, and apart from the hard knocks to which one was liable in falling I found it a most beneficial exercise. But, of course, roller-skating is now almost entirely out of fashion.

"I'll tell you of another exercise which I consider to be excellent from a physical point of view—and that is dancing. I am convinced that people who dance have a better carriage and are much less liable to slip or fall than those who do not. In the country, at family parties and so forth, I occasionally dance still. In town there is not usually the same space for dancing, and, of course, only the younger men are in demand for balls—although I am told that young men nowadays won't dance."

Dr. Farquharson was for some years medical officer at Rugby School, and the rest of our conversation had reference to his experience of the school sports in that capacity. It was his belief that football, as played at Rugby, was less "ferocious" than it looked, although



From a]

SIR CHARLES GAGE-BROWN, WITH HIS FAMILY.

[Photograph.

he remembers seeing the present Archbishop of Canterbury, then the head master, narrowly escape serious injury as the result of the violent excitement of the game.

"Athletics of any kind have had a very small part in my life," Sir Charles Gage-Brown, of Sloane Street, who was for many years consulting physician to the Colonial Office, states in reply to my question. "I am seventy-four and in excellent health," he continues; "at the same time I would not say a word in depreciation of physical recreation. In my case I doubtless owe a good deal of my vigour to parentage. My father, who was a commander in the Royal Navy, lived to over eighty, whilst my mother died at the age of 101."

As Sir Charles spoke he turned to portraits of both his parents in his consulting-room. "This was the secret of my mother's long and happy life," he said, pointing to a ball of wool which lay on the old lady's lap. "She was always occupied.

"As a boy I used to play cricket, and I had my own boat in Portsmouth Dockyard. But since I was apprenticed—lads were 'apprenticed' to the medical profession in those days—at the age of fifteen I have never had leisure for any regular outdoor recreation. For many years I had five hours' driving daily—calling upon my patients—and that counted for a good deal in the way of fresh air, at any rate. If I had had more leisure I should like to have given it to geology and archæology. As it is, all I have been able to do is to explore a few districts, such as that of Charmouth, exceptionally interesting in geology, and visit from time to time cathedral towns and other old places for archæological study. I now spend a good part of each summer at some rural spot, studying bird and animal life and Nature generally—last year, for instance, I took a house in Kent, and the year before that I went into Northamptonshire. So, you see, I have never found myself in the groove for much outdoor sport. Nowadays, when young men prepare for the medical profession in a different way, it might

be different. But, as I have told you, I was apprenticed at the early age of fifteen, and owing to an influenza epidemic in London I got into busy practice immediately after leaving King's College Hospital. But although I cannot say much from my own personal experience, I do not think that the value of physical recreation is overrated, although outdoor sports may be overdone."

Sir Peter Eade, one of the best-known physicians out of London, had a somewhat similar story to tell me when I ran down to Norwich to see him in his old-fashioned house in St. Giles's Street.

"In early life I did pretty well everything, although I don't think I excelled in anything—cricket, football, rowing, fishing, riding, and so on. But when I got into practice I found it necessary to give all my time to my profession. A practice which takes you all over the county of Norfolk is, as you suggest, rather different from that of a specialist in Harley Street. Of course, there is plenty of travelling, by road as well as by rail; but I can hardly regard this as recreation, seeing that one never knows what sort of case may await one at the end of the journey.

"When I retire from the active exercise of my profession—I am now seventy-five, and intend to do so in the course of a year or so—I shall probably take up cycling. In the meantime I find my only recreation in my garden. Would you like to see it?"

And Sir Peter Eade leads me into a delightfully old-fashioned pleasure, such as one would expect to find behind these venerable residences in St. Giles's Street.

"I don't do any of the hard work, I must confess. But I rake and hoe and clip and prune at odd intervals of leisure, and find constant pleasure in watching the habits of insects and birds as far as they can be observed in this garden. Occasionally I get a day's fishing, although fishing in this part of the country does not give you much exercise, unlike that of Scotland and the North of England."



SIR PETER EADE.

From a Photo. by Albert E. Coe, Norwich.

In municipal Norwich, I may add, Sir Peter Eade has always been a staunch advocate of physical recreation, and it is largely owing to his efforts, I am assured, that the city is now so well furnished with open spaces and playing-fields.

There is a minority in the medical profession who are somewhat sceptical as to the hygienic value of all this indulgence in physical exercise which is so marked a feature in the social life of our time. Of these, Mr. R. Brudenell Carter, the eminent ophthalmic surgeon, may well stand as a representative in concluding this article.

"My physical recreations," wrote Mr. Carter to me, "are like the snakes in Iceland. Nature has endowed me with an inexhaustible capacity for doing nothing. I never go out when I can stay at home, never stand up when I can sit down, never walk when I can ride."

Mr. Carter somewhat modified this negative attitude, however, when I saw him a few days later in his Harley Street consulting-room.

"As a boy," he told me, "I played cricket, and when I was in general practice I kept four horses going. But this was a matter of necessity, rather than of choice. I had a large country practice, and I could best cover the ground on horseback. To-day my only exercise is to walk in the morning from my house on Clapham Common to Clapham Station—about three-quarters of a mile. I drive home. Ever since I settled in London—about thirty-three years ago—I have had no more exercise than this."

"And you don't consider that your health has suffered from the fact?"

"Well, I am now seventy-two, and I can lift a concave glass—full to the brim—from the table to my mouth without spilling a drop. In my opinion the hygienic value of athletics is chiefly a matter of food. People of sedentary habits continually eat too much, and find that they must counteract the effect of doing so by some form of violent exercise. Sportsmen, for instance, who hunt and shoot during the autumn and winter, have the same

heavy meals—it is largely a matter of social convention, of course—in the summer without any similar exercise, and in consequence find that they must spend a few weeks at Homburg or Baden-Baden. When I came to London and began to lead my present sedentary life—receiving patients here and writing a good deal at home—I soon found that I could not advantageously continue my country habits, and so reduced my food to the smallest amount required for the sustenance of life. I made no change in the kind of food—I am not an advocate of fancy diets."

"But don't you think, Mr. Carter, that in giving pleasure physical exercise may be beneficial to the health?"

"Of course, there is that aspect of the subject to be considered. But I don't know that this much can be said in favour of some popular recreations. Take the case of the most popular sport of the day—cycling. I have never tried it—the bicycle came into fashion too late for me—but nothing will persuade me that young men can get any physical good from tearing along a road, half doubled up, until they become hot and exhausted.

"For my own part, I am happiest sitting in my library with a book, and on Sundays I enjoy staying in the house all day. Of course I get plenty of fresh air—I am strongly in favour of fresh air; and the best thing which can be said in favour of most sports is that it takes people into fresh air. At the same time, I don't think I am of an indolent disposition. When I am going anywhere I go briskly, and I have no patience with people who dawdle."

Mr. Brudenell Carter, it may be of interest to add, is the son of an officer in the Army, and himself saw something of active service as a staff surgeon during the Crimean War. To-day, although not particularly muscular and somewhat pale in features, he gives you the impression of what he is—a quick and energetic worker in a profession calling for the finest nerves and the highest mental qualities.