

**RECREATION**

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Recreation by Edward Grey

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**EDWARD GREY**

# **RECREATION**



Grey, Edward Grey, 1st. viscount

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## RECREATION

IT is sometimes said that this is a pleasure-seeking age. Whether it be a pleasure-seeking age or not, I doubt whether it is a pleasure-finding age. We are supposed to have great advantages in many ways over our predecessors. There is, on the whole, less poverty and more wealth. There are supposed to be more opportunities for enjoyment: there are moving pictures, motor-cars, and many other things which are now considered means of enjoyment and which our ancestors did not possess, but I do not judge from what I read in the newspapers that there is more content. Indeed, we seem to be living in an age of discontent. It seems to be rather on the increase than otherwise, and is a subject of general complaint. If so it is worth while consider-

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ing what it is that makes people happy, what they can do to make themselves happy, and it is from that point of view that I wish to speak on recreation.

Let it be admitted that recreation is only one of the things that make for happiness in life. I do not even recommend it as the most important. There are at least four other things which are more or less under our own control and which are essential to happiness. The first is some moral standard

1. by which to guide our actions. The second
2. is some satisfactory home life in the form of good relations with family or friends. The
3. third is some form of work which justifies our existence to our own country and makes us good citizens. The fourth thing is some
4. degree of leisure and the use of it in some way that makes us happy. To succeed in making a good use of our leisure will not compensate for failure in any one of the other three things to which I have referred,

but a reasonable amount of leisure and a good use of it is an important contribution to a happy life. How is this happy use of leisure to be insured? We sometimes meet people who do not seem to know what to do with their spare time. They are like the man of whom it was said, "He doesn't know what he wants, and he won't be happy till he gets it." The first thing, therefore, is to take ourselves out of that category, to know definitely what we want, and to make sure it is something that will make us happy when we get it; and that is the beginning of recreation. You are entitled to say to me, "That is all very well as a general piece of advice, but tell us how you have followed and applied it yourself"; and it would not be fair for me to shrink from answering that question. In one respect I must plead failure. I have been a failure as regards golf, not because I did not succeed, but because I did not want to succeed. I have

a great respect for golf. I am sure it is very good for many people; I know very many good people who play golf; but it so happens that it does not give me a good time, and so I leave the recommendation of it to people who can speak of it with more appreciation.

But I do recommend some game or games as a part of recreation. As long as I could see to play and had sufficient leisure, I enjoyed immensely the game of real or court tennis, a very ancient game, requiring activity as well as skill, a game in which Americans may take interest and some pride, because for the first time, at any rate, in the recent history of the game, an amateur is champion of the world and that amateur is an American. The English are sometimes criticized for paying too much attention to games. A British officer whom I know well, who happened to be in Africa at the outbreak of the war and took part in