

Perhaps the most useful feature of hobbyism is the boon it bestows in declining years when a man must, or wishes to, retire from the activities of a lifetime. Take a farmer whose whole life history may be briefly summed in that of a day—hard work, hearty meals, an evening smoke, then off to bed. He has accumulated wealth. The farm is sold. He takes the family and settles in a city residence, where he can rest and enjoy himself. The prisoner in his cell is not more unhappy than he. I have in mind a farmer who did this, and after less than two years city life he bought eight or ten acres outside the city, and now on market days he may be seen hobbling about disposing of his load of vegetables. He works away all day long, unable to enjoy the leisure he had earned for himself. If this farmer, while he was younger and doing his heavy field work, had cultivated in his leisure a taste for some pleasure-giving occupations, we can fancy him in his later and less vigorous years exercising himself during the day as had been the habit of his life time, not, of course, in the field but among his fruit trees and vines, his bees or poultry, and in his evenings he could also continue the habit of his life and rest among his books.

And finally, to come to what is of specific interest in our subject, What may we dentists choose as hobbies? First of all, let us note what must be avoided. It is a mistake to think that any athletic sport can be a suitable hobby. Too much cannot be said in favor of athletics for the needed exercise and pleasure they afford, but to make any athletic sport a hobby means an effort to excel, and any excellence attained, whether in boating, bicycling, running, or what you will, is too short lived to be considered a desirable hobby, and every physician knows that when athletics are pursued for excellence instead of for moderate exercise, harm frequently results. It would startle some of our aspiring young athletes if they could know the percentage of well-known athletes that have died from pulmonary or cardiac troubles caused by severe training and heavy strain.

Such games as are played with cards, dominoes, checkers, chess, etc., may afford an innocent pastime for an odd hour in the home, or on the steamer or the train, but they are poor stuff for a hobby. The reward or compensation for the time spent is very meagre indeed.

The work of a dentist cannot very well be called sedentary while most of his time is spent standing by the chair; but so constantly and immovably does he stand that its effect is much the same as the most sedentary employment, and with it is the nervous strain that is a very constant feature in our work. Few professions, if any, offer such splendid opportunities for ruining one's health. Let a dentist take a cubby-hole for his operating-room, and, if he is