

# SPORTS AND GAMES

By Robert Bone

To make this subject one of general interest and at the same time not lose sight of its particular reference to the games and sports peculiarly Scottish, it seems advisable to treat it under the following heads:—

- (1).—The Psychology of Sport—or in other words, the reasons which, in the writer's opinion, make sport and athletics have such a hold upon the public.
- (2).—The Necessary Qualities to make an athlete a success in his particular game.
- (3).—How Far the Scot measures up to these qualities in a general way and some of the reasons why he makes for fair success in all forms of sport.
- (4).—A Short History of the characteristics of and the regulations governing Scottish sports and games.

## The Psychology of Sport.

From the earliest history of the human race, the superman, whether he be endowed with mental vision above that of his fellows, or whether he be the possessor of a physique which enables him to excel his fellow men in feats of strength and endurance, has been the admiration and envy of his time. It is only within the last few centuries that the old saying "Might is Right" has been wholly discounted by the advance of civilization, and today "Might" has given place to Love and kindlier feelings. One does not require, in dealing with this topic to touch upon the superman of exceptional mental powers, although, to be a successful athlete a man has to be endowed with a clear and fast-thinking brain, but the nature of the subject compels us to consider the physical man.

Those who have made a study of the ancient classics will recall that even as early as the time when the Roman Empire was at the height of its power, the man of brawn and muscle was as much of a national hero as he who controlled the destinies of the Empire. In these early days of civilization, the physical development of man was one of his most important assets, and, coupling this with marked superiority in some form of athletics, his name became a household word. Even at this date, we are still prone to hero-worship, as witness, in the United States, where the names of baseball players are known to the smallest boys in the street.

The Scot has the enviable reputation of being a very industrious man, and, generally speaking, he appears to have made sport subservient to business progress—a very commendable and laudable course.

One of the best features of our present day civilization is the intelligent attention given to play and to all forms of outdoor sports and pursuits. We have learned that all work and no play is as bad as all play and no work, and that to mix work and play in proper proportions is the solution of a healthful and happy life. Authorities on the education of the child and young man are agreed upon the need of a certain amount of physical exercise in some form, and even in our schools the youngest have to go through some form of exercise. In the late War the soldier made remarks on "physical jerks" as he termed his daily exercise. To keep the fighting man in trim, a certain amount of bodily exercise was necessary. The healthful effect of legitimate exercise on the human body is recognised. It should be our endeavour to keep ourselves fit, both mentally and physically, by taking the steps necessary to develop our bodies.

When mentioning exercise, one need not necessarily mean athletics as, generally speaking, the nature of a man's play is more or less governed by that of his business. For instance to get the full enjoyment out of play, a man whose occupation is of a sedentary nature will most likely look for some form of game which will stir up his system and make a demand upon his physical energy to a more or less extent. Again, a man who is expending a lot of energy in his daily

work, will find his full enjoyment in a form of play which will be of a mental kind. Take, for instance, the miner, who is called upon, from the nature of his occupation, to expend his physical energy—he will find his chief enjoyment in such quiet amusement as quoits, chess, draughts, card playing, etc., showing that the nature of a man's play is usually distinctly opposite to that of his work. Of course, there are exceptional cases, but it stands to reason, that one cannot call upon his reserve of energy all the time, as nature will assert itself sooner or later.

It is generally held that this is the era of athletics, and while there may be excesses in this as well as in all other directions, no one can doubt that the general tendency is wholesome, and makes for physical, intellectual and moral improvement. We have come to see that play is a necessary and important part of life, and should be made to yield physical strength and grace and also moral stamina. Writers of travel, adventure, etc., often picture life as a battle, a fight, and so it is; but the fight is not only a moral one of good against evil, but a physical one of health against disease. Generally speaking, happiness and success in life are impossible without health. The fight for health is thus worth while, and exercise in some form or other is a necessary adjunct to human life. Exercise may take the form of walking, running, physical development, and even such an occupation as that of gardening when undertaken as a hobby; but behind all this is the necessity for the out-door life in one form or another. Think of the men and women whom you specially admire, and you will find that most of them were, or are, robust, healthy, clear-minded people with steady nerves and strong bodies.

Every young man or woman whose ambition it is to make his or her life count for something in the future, should see to it that he or she first builds up a strong healthy body. All wholesome play, instead of being time wasted, is health stored up, and everyone should learn thoroughly at least one form of outdoor sport. In later life, he may find his particular choice too strenuous, but, in such a case, it behooves him for health reasons, to take up some other line of a less exacting nature. One of the most healthful exercises, and one which can be enjoyed by the youngest and oldest alike, is walking, an exercise which can be taken to suit one's stamina. Better than walking, however, are the different kinds of recreation which call for some competition.

We never get too old for play, which is one of the best tonics in the world, and when there is the spirit of competition, greater interest and pleasure always attaches to a game. The highest medical authorities agree that we should regard exercise, if not as a pleasure, then as one of the important agents of health, and treat it with as much consideration as one would his ordinary physical needs. The hold which sport has upon the general public is accounted for by the fact that the competitive spirit enters more or less into every game; and such competition may be in individual battle or in that of team work.

## QUALITIES NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS

To make a success in any form of athletics, one must be in the best physical shape, and, to this end, it is absolutely necessary to avoid excesses in any form. Even in the ordinary routine of life, it is essential, if you are to give of your best, whether it be physical or mental work, that you be possessed of a healthy body. Even more so in the case of an athlete it is necessary that he lead a temperate life to keep up his strength and endurance to the highest. In other words, the athlete, besides avoiding excesses in eating and drinking, must lead a highly moral life, if he desires to excel in his special sport. Athletics and sports are not only the means