

THE NAKED TRUTH
ABOUT NUDISM



THE NAKED TRUTH ABOUT NUDISM

BY
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"Naked and Unashamed"

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To

MY WIFE

Sharer of my adventures

Inspirer of my visions

“ If anything is sacred, the human body is sacred;
And the glory and sweet of a man is a token of
manhood untainted;

And in man or woman a clean, strong, firm-fibred
body is more beautiful than the most beautiful
face.”

WALT WHITMAN

(Leaves of Grass)

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

MUCH water has rolled under the bridges since I wrote *Naked and Unashamed** barely a year ago. At the time, it seemed rather daring to write a book about "Nudism" and doubtful if there were enough people interested in the subject to make it worth while; since then the book has run into a Fourth Edition and I have received letters of appreciation from all over the world and an Oliver Twist-like request for "more." My publishers and I decided the time was ripe for a bigger book—one that would cover the whole ground in a more intimate and more thorough fashion and that would be provocative of thought amongst Nudists and non-Nudists alike.

In this volume I have endeavoured to deal in detail with the various aspects in the light of personal experience, close study and wide discussion on the subject. It would,

* *Naked and Unashamed*—Nudism from Six Points of View. Thorsons, 3/6 nett.

perhaps, be too much to expect that every reader will agree entirely with all my conclusions; but I do not think anyone can question the facts upon which they are founded, or deny the reasonableness and logic of my deductions. Although my wife and I are enthusiastic Nudists ourselves, I do not want this book to be regarded as a piece of "special pleading." It is not that. Nudism is far too big a thing (already) for personal predilections to affect it, and it is growing more rapidly than I should have believed possible when I first became interested in it. "Good wine needs no bush" is an old saying that even in these days of forceful advertising remains largely true. But amongst those insufficiently acquainted with the Movement there are many misunderstandings which need to be cleared up and there are points which have not been considered with sufficient thoroughness to enable Nudists themselves to realise their full significance. It is the aim of this book to enlighten the former and prove helpful to the latter. I myself have benefited from writing the book. It has caused me to concentrate my thoughts and analyse various phases until I have widened my knowledge and clarified my understanding.

It has made personal discussion more interesting to me and helped me to get more concrete enjoyment from the practice of Nudism.

Readers unfamiliar with the Movement will find in the following pages many things which will surprise them, and yet are so much a matter of course to the Nudist that they are hardly realised by the latter. It might be said that real Nudists are scarcely aware of the fact that they are nude, while the uninitiated imagine that such knowledge must outweigh all other thoughts. I know a couple who arrived at one of our Camps in a state bordering on panic and yet became as much at home as the regular members within ten minutes of disrobing. When they went home in the evening they were confirmed enthusiasts.

Although many articles have appeared in the Press, written by journalists who have seen possibilities of "topical copy" in a visit to a Nudist Camp (or, as they usually term it, a "Nudist Colony"), I think most people who actually have joined a Nudist community find it difficult to recall any definite impressions of their first experience. Certainly they will not remember enough of the details to make an interesting article. By the time

they have returned home the whole thing seems so natural that it can hardly be considered as "an experience" at all. It may be taken for granted that nearly all potential members have given a great deal of thought to the subject and embraced the idea in theory before making application for admission. Many have "sunbathed" on occasions when they have been alone, or with a member of their own sex, in suitable surroundings. The association of mixed sexes unclothed seems to be the real bugbear of the uninitiated. And this misunderstanding can only be dispelled, finally and completely, by actual experience; although I hope those who read this book to the end will have gained considerable enlightenment and have learnt to view the subject in proper perspective. I hope, too, that those who already are Nudists will feel that they have gained some knowledge and interest from these pages. We can all learn something from one another and it is often agreeable to find our own indefinite ideas crystallised and set down in black and white. In the Chapters "Clubs We Have Visited," "My Ideal Club," "Artificial Sunlight" and "Indoor Nudism," I believe all Nudists will find some information of interest and value.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Now, having made my bow and announced the origin and object of my efforts, it is time to "cut the cackle and come to the 'osses."

WILLIAM WELBY.

Essex, August, 1935.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS NUDISM?

WHAT is "Nudism"? Although during the last year or so, Nudism has received a good deal of publicity, it is as difficult to define as "Socialism" and similar "isms." For the same reason—while the general basic principles are agreed, individuals differ considerably as to details. The "Back-to-Nature" Nudists (the "whole-hoggers," as one might say) eschew meat-eating, alcohol and tobacco. In some of the German colonies, even cooked food is regarded as unconstitutional. Here in England, and in one French club, the wearing of brassieres and the cache-sex or small triangular slips like those worn upon the stage is sometimes accepted as Nudism. In my youth these slips were commonly worn by male bathers, but no one thought of the wearers as being nude. Indeed, I can remember that when I first wore a "costume" I had to stand a good deal of chaff; it was considered as rather an affectation. Again, some Nudists are enthusiastic in shedding

their clothes in the open air, but dislike the idea of being without clothes indoors. Others, admitted extremists, like to spend all their leisure-time at home in the nude. Yet with all these differences, there is a link—a sort of Freemasonry—between all Nudists and an earnest desire to be healthy and happy in a natural way. As there are many misconceptions of Nudism prevalent, perhaps it will be as well to say what Nudism is *not*; there will be no disagreement here. Quite definitely Nudism is not an excuse for sexual orgies or licensed promiscuity. It is not a channel for exhibitionism or pruriency. Nor are all Nudists vegetarian fanatics and believers in Nature-cures. I have visited the principal Clubs and Camps in this country, and all the members I have talked with have proved intelligent, interesting, broad-minded and essentially friendly. It is astonishing how quickly one feels at home in a Nudist group with people one has never met before.

Another thing which many people do not seem to appreciate is that Nudism is not just an ultra-modern cult. In Scandinavia, in Finland, even in Ireland, the practice of discarding clothes on certain occasions has been known for many generations. In our own mining dis-

tricts it is not uncommon for families to take their baths in the general sitting-room in the presence of the other members. We do not need to go back to the times of the ancient Greeks, when the youth of both sexes competed publicly in athletic games and exercises in complete nudity, to realise that quite respectable people have seen no harm, and taken no harm, in the revealing of unclothed bodies. To children there is nothing disagreeable or disgusting in the sight of their own bodies, or those of others—until they have been taught that there is something, they are not told what, wrong or disgraceful in seeing, or being seen, without clothes. It is then that the seeds of curiosity are sown and the sexual parts endowed with an atmosphere of mystery and excitement which may later lead to undesirable consequences. It would hardly be too much to say that the majority of sexual faults and aberrations are largely due to this unwholesome and artificial atmosphere. The body needs open air and sunlight—and so does the mind. There have been a number of fanatical groups who have adopted nudity as part of their religion, such as the "Adamites" of the second century, who assembled for their religious rites in a state of nudity and claimed that if Adam had not sinned there

would have been no marriages. This creed was revived in the twelfth century and again about 1415, being finally suppressed in 1420. Also the Doukhobors, a Russian sect who caused a good deal of trouble to the Canadian Government some years ago, by parading the streets naked when protesting against taxation and other regulations. They have recently been offered special concessions by a South American Government with a view to tempting them to migrate and develop unsettled land there.

The more modern phase of Nudism, however, is founded upon sane and healthy principles and the outlook of Nudists generally is one of logic and commonsense. It may be said to have originated as an organised movement in Germany as a direct consequence of the War. No other country engaged in the World War of 1914-18 suffered quite so severely as Germany in the lowering of national physique. Not only did she lose, as so many other countries lost, the best of her young manhood on the field of battle, but the "blockade" caused a shortage of essential foods and comforts; and owing to her inability to provide proper nourishment for mothers, expectant mothers and babies, she had to face a new generation handicapped from the very beginning. Born and bred under con-

ditions of famine and anxiety, this generation could hardly be expected to produce a normal physique. The people of Germany realised this and took practical steps to overcome their handicap. Almost immediately the War was over, the "Wander Vogel," or bands of hikers, came into being. The youth of both sexes was inspired and encouraged to tramp about the country in free and easy costumes, camping in huts or in the open, with a freedom and enthusiasm that set an example to the World. These "Birds of Passage" marched miles in fine weather or foul, singing and cheering and improving both their physique and spiritual powers at the same time. Fresh air, exercise, and a spirit of camaraderie became almost a religion amongst the young people, and this earnest desire for healthy freedom was quite logically followed by the establishment of "Nacktkultur" or what we call "Nudism." The Germans are a scientific nation. The value of sun and air was fully appreciated by them, and the utilisation of these gifts of Nature became another craze. The "Freikorperkultur," "Freilicht" and similar associations soon grew to a membership of between three and four millions and these were not restricted to youth alone. Men and women of all ages and all

classes joined in the movement and a great many "foreigners" were attracted by the facilities for sun- and air-bathing and exercise "in the nude" offered in Germany which, at that time, were not available in their own countries. Some of these "foreigners" enjoyed themselves so much, and derived so much practical benefit from their visits, that they infected their friends with their own enthusiasm, and so groups began to form in other countries.

Amongst the earliest and most notable of these "missionaries" were the Americans, Frances and Mason Merrill, who recorded their experiences in their book, *Among the Nudists*. They did not go to Germany to investigate Nudism. Their doctor sent them on a trip to Europe to recuperate from what was tantamount to a nervous breakdown and they came into touch with the Nudist movement quite accidentally. There must have been many cases like this. One hears of them incidentally; a friend of my own, whom I least expected to be interested in the subject, told me of a client of his who was recommended to take his rather delicate wife to one of these German colonies, and was so pleased with the result that they made a regular yearly pilgrimage for several years afterwards.

Under the Hitler régime, many of these camps and clubs have been closed down—not on account of their members being nude, but for political reasons. “Nacktkultur” was a progressive movement fostered by the Socialist Government and the Socialist municipalities and, as such, naturally came under restriction by the new Government, which no doubt regarded such communities as hot-beds for Socialistic activities. There were Public Sunbathing Parks, owned by municipalities somewhat on the lines of our own “Lansbury Lido” in Hyde Park, and the public swimming baths in Berlin were reserved two or three days a week for nude bathing. These no longer enjoy the approval of the Government. Private clubs, free from any political taint, however, were not interfered with and the first “Freilichtpark” of all—that instituted by Paul Zimmerman at Klingberg—advertised for visitors in an English magazine during the summer of 1934. The example of Germany was soon followed by other countries, and clubs and camps were established in Austria, Belgium, England, France, Greece, Holland, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and America. The American movement was, perhaps, the most active and progressive and the Merrills followed up their first book

with another called *Nudism Comes to America*. A number of associations were formed in the U.S.A., and the International Nudist Conference of New York published an excellent monthly magazine with the title of *The Nudist*. This was a highly respectable publication edited by a clergyman, but under the emotional revolution caused by financial crises, a "New Purity Campaign" was inaugurated and it was decided that the distribution of literature containing photographs of the unclothed bodies of male and female human beings was a contravention of the Comstock Law (enacted about 1870) against obscenity; so *The Nudist* could not be carried by the U.S. Mail. Subsequently, it was banned from certain "book-stands" by the local authorities. This is rather ironical in view of the freely displayed magazines of a certain class, purporting to cater for "film fans," but actually appealing to the pornographically-minded with photographs of alleged celebrities in a state of semi-nudity, accentuated by sheer silk stockings and alluring underwear, and cabaret shows in which young ladies dance and parade among the restaurant tables wearing nothing but a diminutive "cache-sex."

In England, however, the movement has grown steadily and sanely. Many conservative

people have been drawn to it by appreciation of the opportunities it affords for healthy freedom. Not a few clergymen are enthusiastic Nudists and at least one has been bold enough to profess his faith in public and in print. What is it that attracts them? As I have already pointed out, it certainly is not prurience or exhibitionism. Practically all clubs are family affairs in every sense of the word and no man would expose his wife and children to the gaze of the curious and impure-minded. It is usual, with all reputable clubs, to refuse membership to single men unless accompanied by a lady—who may be a sister, fiancée or friend. It may be taken for granted that prurient people do not join Nudist organisations—firstly, because they would not care to expose themselves before a group of twenty or forty fellow-members of all ages and both sexes (they are usually more prudish than ordinary individuals when it comes to personal exposure); secondly, because no one can join a reputable club without strict scrutiny and satisfactorily answering a stringent questionnaire; and thirdly, because if they expected thrills of a sexual kind they would be bitterly disappointed. There are none.

I will not, here, go into the various reasons why people do become Nudists, because I propose to give, in a later chapter, some actual examples which have come to my knowledge at first hand. But I will try, with the reservations mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, to explain what is generally understood as Nudism by those who actually practise it.

First and foremost it is a means to health. The skin of the human body needs light and air just as much as plants do and you have only to think of the results of shutting up your plants in dark cells without ventilation, to realise that for your skin to be covered up with layers of clothing every hour in every year is a practical comparison, to appreciate that this is not a good thing for it. Fortunately, the human system is so extraordinarily adaptable that, after many generations, we who are accustomed to keep our bodies covered up have become almost immune to the evil consequences. The lamentable effects upon races unused to clothing when they have first been persuaded to it, however, are still within current memory. Natives of Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia, generally referred to as the South Sea Islands, have been decimated and some



racers have become almost extinct owing to the introduction of civilisation's first gifts—clothes and alcohol.

I do not wish to suggest that clothes and alcohol should be abolished. I have grown used to both and should miss them sadly. One acquaintance, referring to my book *Naked and Unashamed*, said to me: "So you are one of those people who want us all to go about without clothes!" I said I was not, nor had I ever met a Nudist who even contemplated such a thing. I answered him, in the Irish way, with another question. I suggested that when he played golf he probably wore plus-fours and when he went swimming he wore a bathing costume; but did he attend Board Meetings of his Company in either garb? The fact remains that the human body does need air and light and it is only by throwing off every vestige of clothing that it is possible for light and air to reach the skin. Loose clothing, and as little of it as possible, has long been recommended by medical men, and this certainly allows a greater amount of air to act upon the skin; but it is not as effectual as being without clothing altogether. Nor does it admit the beneficial effects of the light rays. To go back to our previous analogy, it is rather like keeping our plants in

a cage of perforated zinc, which admits a certain amount of air but keeps out the light of the sun. Readers who are interested in gardening will be familiar with "earthing up" or brown-paper wrappers for "blanching" celery and other plants, and the effects upon a plant which, accidentally, has been covered up by an old box or piece of sacking. Without the action of light it is impossible for the plant to secrete the substance known as chlorophyl, which makes all vegetable life green. And this substance is essential to life. It is even sold in synthetic form as a remedy for lack of vitality and ill-health under a branded name, and is advertised extensively as the "———" brand of chlorophyll. The occasional exposure of the skin to sun and air is therefore extremely beneficial to health and is one of the merits of Nudism. The one form of pride in which any Nudist, irrespective of physical beauty, can indulge is the clear, healthy-looking skin with a becoming tan which is gained by exposure to sun and wind. In addition, in a Nudist group of mixed sexes, there is a strong incentive to physical exercises to improve both health and appearance, which does not exist to the same extent under other conditions.

But while health is, in my opinion, the main plank in the platform of Nudism, it is not the only thing to be considered. The Director of a well-known Nudist Club, who said he "had nothing but praise" for my previous book, suggested that I had stressed the physical side of Nudism, but had not fully emphasised the social value of the movement. I still regard this as a secondary consideration, but it is by no means without importance. The casting off of clothes does undoubtedly induce a feeling of freedom in the mind, as it does in the body. It gives a sensation of emancipation, as it were; or, as I have said elsewhere, a sort of "out-of-school feeling." Anyone who has come home and changed from a business suit into a tennis shirt and flannels will have some idea of this feeling, but to be in the open air on a fine, sunny day, with no clothes on at all, accentuates it to the Nth degree. And the friendliness, frankness and general camaraderie of a Nudist group has never been equalled by any ordinary club. The practice of Nudism is, in itself, an indication of breadth of mind, a freedom from artificial and even petty conventions and affectations, to which most of us in everyday life conform without any logical thought. The community of interests in a

Nudist camp exercises a remarkable social influence, and at the same time there is a chastening effect which develops feelings of refinement and good taste. I have never heard a questionable joke or observed bad manners in such a gathering. Everyone seems on his best behaviour, notwithstanding a certain youthful exhilaration noticeable in games, and even a certain amount of innocent "sky-larking."

I am sorry that the question of sex seems to have formed so large a part in discussions on Nudism. So far as being an obsession, as some inexperienced people think, sex is far less emphasised in a Nudist community than it is at a dance or similar social function. Particularly on the feminine side. The alluring frocks which conceal and reveal at the same time; the various aids to sex appeal to which Modern Woman has access; sensuous music; rich foods and alcohol in tempting variety and the usually overheated atmosphere, are all lacking in a Nudist camp. There are no "sitting-out" places where flirtations and "petting" may be carried on, and it is certain that any member overstepping the line of true modesty would be instantly requested to resign. As I shall deal at greater length

with the subordination of sex in Chapter IV., I need not dwell upon it here, but I hope to show, very clearly, that a very short time in a Nudist camp will blow away the cobwebs of sexual complexes far more effectively than any psycho-analysis or indoor debates upon the subject.

The question of diet, too, is not an essential of Nudist philosophy. The simple, almost primitive life in a Nudist camp tends to make people satisfied with simple foods, and there are a great many vegetarians in the Nudist ranks; but there is no dogmatic rule by which members must be bound. Alcohol is, quite wisely, I think, prohibited in Nudist camps and clubs, but Nudists are not all teetotallers. What they eat and drink when away from the community is entirely their own concern. Personally, I have not found any club where tobacco is prohibited, although I do know of Nudist enthusiasts who regard smoking as a form of self-poisoning entirely out of keeping with a movement mainly directed towards improvement in, and maintenance of, health. A confirmed smoker myself, I can appreciate this point of view even if I do not see my way to conform to

it. I have to admit that in this respect they are more logical than I am.

I hope that by now the reader has begun to realise that Nudist groups are not composed of immoralists and faddists. That they do not pursue their activities without reason, and that even though the movement may not appeal to all, there is much to be said in its favour and no sound reason at all for condemning it. Those stupid individuals who have on occasion been prosecuted for appearing nude in public receive no more sympathy from real Nudists than they are likely to get from the world in general, and anyone who associates these eccentrics with the movement is sadly lacking in discrimination. Nudism is not a religious movement; it embraces members of all denominations including clergymen of the Church of England and Nonconformist Ministers. It is not a class movement; among its adherents will be found naval and military officers, doctors, members of the Bar, middle-class business men and women, clerks and typists. It has no political significance in this country, whatever associations it may have had in Germany or other countries. Its practitioners have no desire to proselytise, or carry out a crusade of conversion. Nudism

is for you if, after careful study and consideration, it appeals to you. If it does not, there is no more to be said. It may be that some of your friends are Nudists without your knowing it or you may have friends of whose sensibility and respectability you are assured, who frankly and without hesitation will affirm their belief in, and sympathy for, the movement.

Now, after having cleared the ground of possible minor misconceptions, I will deal with some of the more detailed phases which need to be considered in order to understand, rightly, "What is Nudism?"

CHAPTER II.

NUDISM AND HEALTH.

THIS is not a medical book. Nor is it one of those pseudo medical books which, after an elaborate description of symptoms and treatment, finish up with "Call in the Doctor." But in dealing with the effects of Nudism on health, it will be necessary to dip into the lexicon of the medical man occasionally and to touch lightly on physiology and therapeutics. There is no doubt whatever that Nudism is an aid to health, and I shall endeavour to show how and why.

It is only comparatively recently that the importance of the skin has been properly appreciated. Cleanliness and friction have, of course, for centuries been understood as beneficial to health. In the days of the Greeks and Romans, baths and massage were almost a matter of routine. It may not be common knowledge that what we call "Turkish" baths are really "Roman" baths—introduced to the Turks by their Roman conquerors. During

the Roman occupation of Britain these baths were quite common here; but, like many excellent Roman institutions, they disappeared after the invasions of the barbaric Danes and Saxons and were not re-adopted for some centuries. The exudation of poisons through the skin by perspiration is a very ancient remedy and is still employed in the modern practice of Medicine. This is what is really meant by the expression "A good, healthy sweat." To prevent clogging of the pores, frequent bathing, with a good rub-down, is necessary, and this enables the skin not only to throw off poisonous exudations, but also to absorb health-giving qualities from the air. Our skin needs air as much as our lungs. Modern science has discovered that the skin has even more important functions to perform. We know now that the skin must be regarded as an organ similar to the stomach, kidneys and liver. In other words, it is a sort of chemical factory, that absorbs raw materials and turns them into something else. It effects chemical changes. It is assisted in those changes particularly by the action of light. The absorption of light by the skin, apart from being a necessity of health, has been proved actually to cure some forms of

disease. That exposure of the skin to direct sunlight produced curative results is not a new idea. It was known to, and taken advantage of, by the Ancients. The composition of the spectrum and the effects of various rays, however, is a relatively modern discovery, and even now much research work is being undertaken which may lead to still further enlightenment. In addition to the visible rays of the spectrum, such as we see in a rainbow, it was discovered that at either end of the spectrum were *invisible* rays—at one end the ultra-violet, and at the other end the infra-red. These rays have been proved to have almost miraculous properties. Used conjunctively they act as a remarkable tonic. The ultra-violet are cold rays and the infra-red are heat rays. The ultra-violet rays penetrate but a very short way below the surface of the skin and are completely blocked out by any form of clothing. The infra-red are deeply penetrating rays and reach right into the tissues of the body. In order to bring the blood-stream near the surface of the skin, within reach of the ultra-violet rays, heat is necessary, and therefore to get the full tonic effects of light treatment the infra-red rays must be included. The means of doing this will be

referred to in the chapter on "Artificial Sunlight." For the moment, however, we are only concerned with the *effects* of the rays and not the means of inducing them. The sun being the source of all light, it is obvious that all rays are included in natural sunlight. Given free access, sunlight will enable the skin to store up the important "Vitamin D," and if a sufficient quantity is accumulated during the summer months, our system is enabled to draw upon this supply during the winter months, just as a thrifty person is able to draw upon savings in times of adversity. It is a significant fact that so many elderly or feeble persons die during the last months of winter, say, January and February. It does suggest that at this period of the year the stores of vitality retained from the summer accumulation have then reached their lowest ebb. Amongst the various factors upon which vitality depends are the activities of the "endocrine" glands. Ordinary glands have ducts through which the substances they secrete may flow to other parts of the system; but endocrine glands are those which have no ducts and have no means of passing on their secretions except through the bloodstream itself. They are therefore called "ductless"

glands and they elaborate substances known as "hormones," which are essential to our well-being. These hormones are carried by the bloodstream to all parts of the body and affect the functional activity of distant organs. The endocrine glands are particularly responsive to light treatment, so that the beneficial effects of sunlight (real or artificial) depend largely upon the rays reaching them. Amongst the most important of these glands are the thyroid, pituitary, and those concerned with sexual functions.

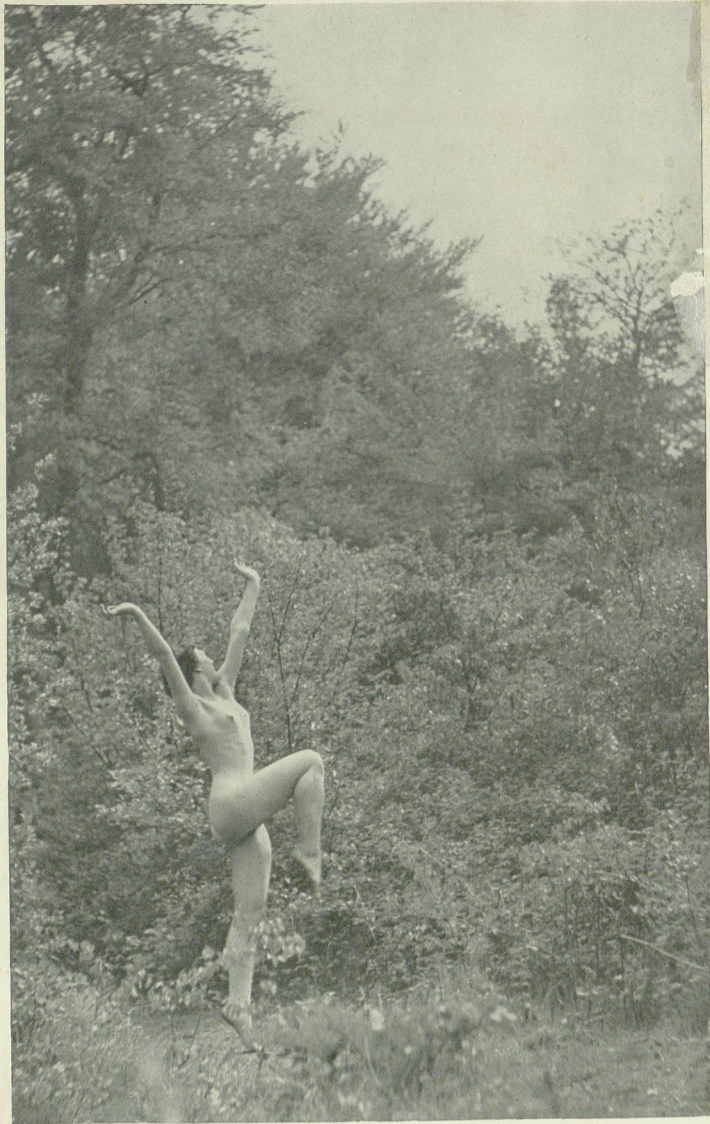
Keeping in view these simple physiological facts, it is not difficult to see several ways in which Nudism can be an aid to health. If the whole of the skin is exposed to the air it will be encouraged to greater activity. Just as the inhaling of fresh air, or oxygen, through the lungs purifies the blood and stimulates the action of the heart, so does light and air invigorate the skin and help it to carry out its functions more rapidly and more efficiently. Poisonous vapours are exhaled freely and fresh vitalising elements are absorbed. The skin is really a kind of "thermostat"—that is, an automatic controller of temperature such as is used on incubators, motor-cars, and in large modern buildings. It is intended by Nature

to control the temperature of our bodies, but, unfortunately, through being coddled and hampered by clothing it has, in most of us, lost a great deal of its power. The average person, who is unused to going without clothes, is very sensitive to the temperature of the surrounding air when unaccustomed parts of the body are exposed. This is not, as so many people think, natural. It simply means that the skin is not doing its job. Any muscle or limb which, through illness or accident, is out of use for some time becomes weak and inefficient. After a long time in bed we find that we have "lost the use of our legs." But nobody would be so absurd as to suggest that we ought always to walk about with the aid of crutches. Yet that is really a parallel to our feeling chilly when certain parts of our body are uncovered. I have often worked and played in my garden through a hot summer day wearing nothing but a pair of cotton "rugger-shorts" and sandals, and later in the evening, when the temperature has been many degrees lower, I have sat on the verandah, talking or listening to the radio, without making any change in my attire. My skin has been as cold to the touch as a piece of wet marble, and yet, inwardly, I have felt "as

warm as toast." I have found it difficult to make people realise how readily the skin will adapt itself in this way, but a little practical experience will convince anyone. Of course, this acclimatisation must be acquired gradually. To sit out-doors on a cold day with little or no clothing, as an experiment, would be extremely foolish and even dangerous. On the other hand, on the Continent and in America, ski-ing and skating parties wearing nothing but boots and socks are by no means uncommon. Some of my own acquaintances have worked on camp clearing here in England in mid-winter in the same garb. There is the very old story of a high official from England watching tobogganning and snow sports in Canada. He was well wrapped up in furs, but felt the intense cold keenly. Near him was an Indian chief clad in nothing but breech-clout, leggings and moccasins. The British personage expressed astonishment that the chief did not feel terribly cold, and the Indian pointed to his face. "You feel cold there?" he asked. "No!" said his Lordship; "but that is my face." "Well!" replied the Indian, rubbing his hand over his chest and stomach, "Me all face."

Probably few, if any, would deny the

desirability of cleansing the body, at least occasionally, by means of a bath, hot or cold; yet to be satisfied with exposing the face and hands to air and light is equivalent to claiming that the washing of hands and face is all that is necessary. Then there are various glands to be considered. Deprived of light they cannot function with complete efficiency. Many eminent medical men are enthusiastic supporters of actino-therapy, or the treatment of disease by light, and some wonderful results have been achieved in this way. It has been proved that, apart from the tonic properties of light, the sun has a definite bactericidal power. Few germs can survive a substantial dose of sunlight. Malignant growths can be arrested, and in some cases destroyed, by light treatment. The secretion of hormones can be increased and a general toning-up of the system achieved by this means. Now, if it has already been proved, and it has, that disease can be cured by submitting affected parts to the action of light, is it unreasonable to infer that exposure of the whole body must be beneficial? And if it is good to combat disease in this way, is it not even better to *prevent* ill-health by similar means? I do not wish it to be thought that I am



recommending Nudism as a "cure-all." I believe, from personal experience and reliable evidence, that its practice is a definite aid to health; but I am by no means a fanatic. Nor do I think everyone a suitable subject. Constitutionally or psychologically, the practice of Nudism may be quite unsuitable to many people. We all know the value of physical culture by means of scientifically-planned exercises, but they are not always suitable for people of delicate or feeble constitutions. There are cases where "one man's meat is another man's poison." Harm can be done, too, by over-exposure to direct sunlight. Those who may be prevented from dangerous exposure in cold weather by a feeling of chilliness and discomfort may, under the genial influence of the sun, unwisely protract their exposure until they have done themselves more harm than good. Erythema, or reddening of the skin, does not usually appear until some hours after the ultra-violet rays have acted upon the skin, and if the skin has been badly burned, it is then too late to do anything but apply palliatives in the form of unguents.

Actual "sun-burn" should be avoided, but if moderate exposures, increased by easy

stages, are adopted, the skin will gradually "tan" and provide its own protection. "Tanning" is really "pigmentation," the forming of pigment in the skin, which is Nature's method of filtering the ultra-violet rays and preventing any excess reaching the more delicate tissues. It follows that parts of the body usually unexposed will naturally be more sensitive to the rays and must be treated with even greater care than hands and face and arms. The use of oils and lotions is of but small value after damage has been done, but, as a preventive, cocoanut oil well rubbed into the skin before exposure is decidedly useful. This is preferable to olive oil and at the same time less expensive; the slight odour, which may be disliked by some people, soon evaporates in the open air. It is quite a mistake to regard lying in the sun for protracted periods as a health-giving sun-bath. This is far more likely to cause enervation, irritability and dizziness. It is delightful to bask in the comforting rays of the sun and relax occasionally, but some form of exercise is essential. In Nudist camps there is always work to be done for those who feel inclined to it, and it may vary in strenuousness from felling trees to gathering sticks for the fire. There is great

variety in the games and sports which may be enjoyed in the freedom from clothes—Tennis, Badminton, Tenniquoit, Volley-ball and Archery, amongst others, varying with the resources of the Club. Where swimming pools are available they are sure to prove popular.

Another way in which Nudism is an aid to health is the encouragement it offers to physical culture. One needs to be of stern moral fibre conscientiously to carry out regular exercises in the solitude of the bedroom or bathroom; but with the moral support of fellow members imbued with a spirit of enthusiasm and friendly rivalry and the example of trained athletes of both sexes, there is real enjoyment to be derived from health-giving and beautifying exercises. Solitary exercises are very much like diaries; many people start them, but few keep them up permanently. We are all, consciously or unconsciously, influenced by vanity, and where no clothes are worn there is a strong incentive to improve the appearance of the body. Nudist communities offer incentive, example and opportunity for the improvement of physique in a greater degree than any other social organisation known to me. The fact that the whole

of the body is visible to other members of both sexes is a cogent reason for taking a practical personal interest in physical culture. Exercises under these conditions make a much stronger appeal to children than those taken under compulsion at school, and the middle-aged, even those past middle age, are induced to take part in activities which would not be considered in other circumstances. I have noticed a remarkably youthful spirit amongst comparatively elderly persons of both sexes when taking part in these games and exercises, and I have myself found the freedom and invigorating effects of being without clothes an inducement to greater physical activity. Health also depends a great deal on psychology, and the mental freedom which accompanies bodily freedom is an important factor. Various complexes exist in our subconscious selves, in greater or lesser degree, which may in some cases lead to neuroses, the causes of which are unsuspected. Inhibitions and repressions, founded upon a sense of shame or fear, are often attributable to misunderstandings associated with sex, and may be relieved or dissipated, without recourse to a psycho-analyst, by the simple and harmless recreation of a Nudist group. When whole



SOME
AMATEUR
"SNAPSHOTS"



Many Nudists
are keen
photographers.

families play and work together in a state of nudity the mind is free from any sense of shame or excitement with regard to those parts of the body connected with sexual functions. This freedom, especially in the case of children, saves much tension of the nerves which may otherwise be artificially built up. Once it is realised that no part of the body is in itself shameful or disgusting, the sexual parts cease to have any special significance and attract no more attention or thought than a hand or a foot. The psychological effects of complete nudity are quite different from those of semi-nudity displayed upon the stage or screen with the object of exciting the senses and appealing to the sexuality of those who patronise the box-office. There is much to be said in favour of a "Purity Campaign" against this artificial stimulation of the sexual urge, but familiarity with nudity in a community of genuine Nudists destroys unwholesome and prurient interests of this kind far more effectively than mere deletion or glamorous mystery. An authority on sex, Dr. F. B. Rocstro, writing of the effects of nudity on sexual potency, says: "My personal experience has been that sexual intercourse is sought less frequently, but that the relief ob-

tained has been greater and more satisfying both mentally and physically.”

I have expressed regret that the question of sex should be given such prominence in discussions on Nudism, and I do feel that this aspect has, in many instances, been unduly emphasised, but sex and health are so closely associated that it is not desirable that the association should be altogether ignored. Individuals in whom sex forms an obsession are not suitable subjects for Nudism, and their self-consciousness would probably prove a bar to their ever feeling at home in a Nudist group. Indeed, it is extremely doubtful if they would even get so far as applying for membership. To normal persons, with a simple and natural interest in sex, such associations may be beneficial, inasmuch as they will tend to prevent the formation of sex-complexes. I know, from discussions in which I have taken part, that many who are aware of the benefit to be derived from “sun-bathing” and who may even expose the whole of their bodies in the seclusion of their own gardens, or in a clinic where treatment with artificial sunlight is given, are deterred from joining the Nudists by this question of sex, and I can only say that if they feel strongly

on the point, they are better outside the movement than in it. If, however, their feelings are due merely to lack of knowledge and understanding, they will do well to study the subject seriously and learn from actual practising Nudists what the realities are.

To a real Nudist, sex is quite a subordinate matter and the encouragement to spend more time in the open air, to become healthily tired by physical exercise of one kind or another, to enjoy light and simple meals in congenial company amid natural surroundings, will be found an antidote to hyperæsthesia and undue estimation of sex.

Physically, by acting as a tonic to the whole system and by building up increased resistance to disease and minor complaints, exposure of the whole body to sun and air will improve the health generally, and psychologically it will improve the mind and nerves by the freedom and social interest which is one of the essential features of a Nudist community. And since the social effects are of considerable importance, let us consider them in the next Chapter, "Social Nudism."

CHAPTER III.

SOCIAL NUDISM.

MAN is by nature a gregarious animal and derives more pleasure from acting in concert with his fellows than from solitary pursuits. This is the foundation of all sorts of clubs and associations from the local tennis or bowling club to the world-wide organisation of Freemasonry and similar societies. It is further exemplified in the typical "get together" movements so popular in America. It is indeed natural and desirable that Man should keep in close contact with Mankind to develop and consolidate the best of his characteristics; solitude induces selfishness, morbidity and sluggishness of mind. We shall find, on consideration, that the advantages of social intercourse apply to Nudism as they do to other phases of human life. I have known people admit, in a rather condescending way, that the exposure of the body to sun and air may be beneficial to health; but why, they ask, must one join a club and mix with a crowd

of both sexes to enjoy these benefits? The answer is very simple in one sense, but very complicated in another.

From the purely physical point of view (no thinking creature *can* be considered from the purely physical point of view, actually) there are certain handicaps. Very few are so fortunately situated that they can expose themselves in the open air without risk of being seen by others who, not being Nudists, would be shocked by the sight; and the danger of prosecution for "indecent exposure" is by no means negligible. Possibly on rare occasions a secluded cove by the sea may tempt to a bathe without a costume and perhaps a limited sun-bath after; but, as things are at present, a certain amount of fear must accompany such an adventure and no regularity can be counted upon. In the average private garden the difficulty of securing complete exposure while being safely obscured from other eyes is so great that only a fanatic would attempt to overcome it.

Where, then, can the average person expose his body to the life-giving rays of the sun and caressing currents of air without risking offence to others and interference with himself? I can think of only two situations

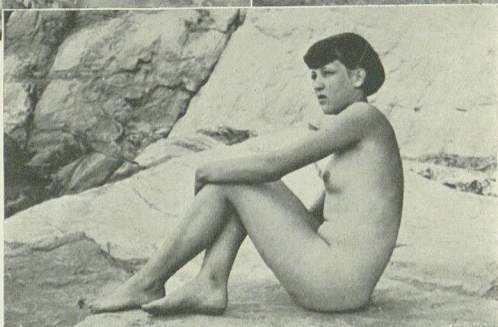
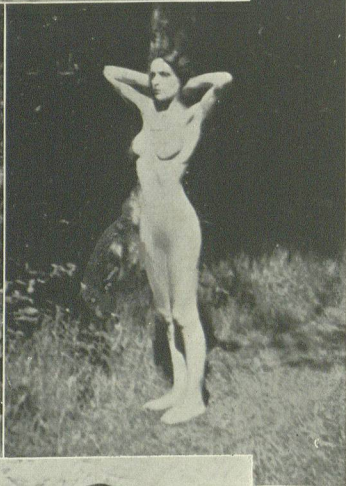
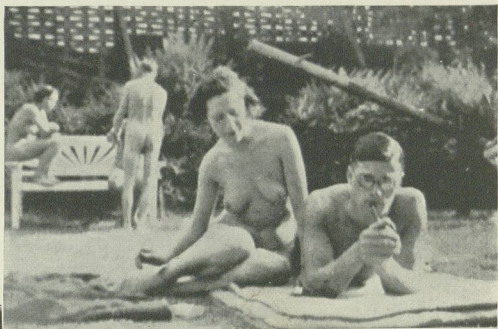
where this would be possible—in some far-off country where nudity provokes no comment, or in a Nudist club at home. Here, if he wishes, he can sun-bathe in perfect security without taking part in any of the social activities of the club and without being regarded as a dangerous eccentric. It is true that he may see other nude people, of both sexes, in his comings and goings, but he can ignore them, as they will ignore him, when he desires privacy. Delicacy of feeling and absence of intrusion are rather more pronounced in a Nudist club than elsewhere. I do not, however, believe that any normal person would seek isolation once he came in contact with the sympathetic atmosphere of a Nudist camp. Friendliness, the desire to be mutually helpful, and a community of interests, will be found more marked here than in almost any other gathering.

Freedom from self-consciousness makes Nudists readier to form acquaintanceship and more sincere in conversation. Generally speaking, too, their intelligence is higher than the average. They are given to reading and travelling and, above all, thinking; most of them have had interesting experiences (quite apart from Nudism) which fit in with talks

on all sorts of subjects and add both charm and ease to speaker and listener alike.

In an otherwise eulogistic review of my book, *Naked and Unashamed*, one reviewer disagreed with my saying that "it is impossible to stand on one's dignity or act snobbishly when bereft of the trappings of class or caste," and he claimed that class distinction and snobbishness can be found just as much in Nudist circles as in any other. Like the Two Black Crows, "I still think he's wrong." It was not my intention to suggest that a well-bred and well-educated man or woman would be indistinguishable from one lacking these advantages. I prefaced the words quoted above by saying that "the feeling of intimacy which association in the nude must inevitably bring about would make for greater friendliness and give encouragement to the communal spirit." I have found this to be true of every gathering of Nudists at which I have been present. At the National Conference it was particularly noticeable. Men and women of totally different classes (from different clubs, of course) chatted together in the most friendly manner.

Certainly there is a difference in the social standing between one club and another; the



difference in fees and subscriptions accounts for this to a great extent, and as most clubs select their members very carefully, it is quite natural that they should maintain a standard suited to their membership. No one of intelligence would suggest that the conversation and companionship of an illiterate person are as enjoyable to cultured people as those of one of their own class. What I mean by "snob-bishness" is the artificial attitude of the semi-cultured or plutocratic individual who has, in his own opinion, "raised himself above" his class and is afraid that other people will not realise it. One hardly ever finds the really well-bred "snobbish" in this sense.

Apart, therefore, from the amenities of a suitable site in, perhaps, a beautiful woodland with shelters, a swimming pool and other advantages unavailable to the solitary sun-bather, there is much to be said for the actual social life of a Nudist camp. First, there is the feeling of absolute freedom when you have "cast your clouts" and stepped forth "naked and unashamed." You experience a sensation of increased physical well-being, and when you join a group of fellow members you feel at ease generally. You do not feel that you are a peculiar person doing something eccentric,

because all your companions are doing the same and enjoying it. There may, perhaps, be a subconscious touch of the Pharisee inasmuch as you feel you are “not as other men”—those poor creatures who do not realise the delights of such freedom or lack the moral courage to embark on such an adventure. But this modest pride is quite harmless and far preferable to the envy and malice of the outer world.

You can either join in a friendly and animated discussion, have a quiet chat with an acquaintance, or take part in one of the many games which are usually available. You will find a definite encouragement to physical exercise, either in games or carefully-planned exercises under a qualified instructor. It is quite different from the “daily dozen” in your bathroom or bedroom. Something of the competitive spirit is introduced without jealousy. You will be pleased to find you can perform better than “A,” and you will want to try hard to equal “Z.” When it is all over, you may seek light refreshment or, if the time is opportune, you may have lunch or tea on a grassy slope or reclining in a deck-chair with a group of merry companions.

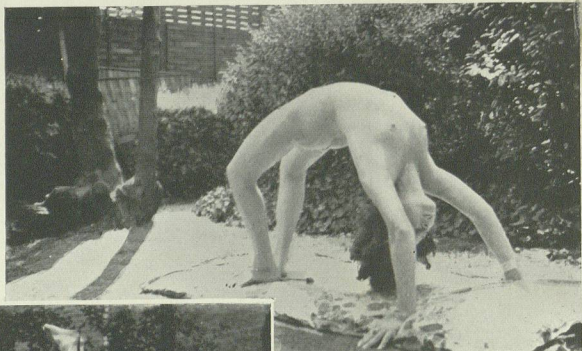
Laughter and good spirits are inseparable from a Nudist gathering. You may have your own hut or tent and form your own family group, or you may join in a larger party. Probably little exchanges of delicacies will take place, for ordinary Nudists are not bound to Spartan fare. In one club I know, hot meals three times a day are available for those who desire them, although the "picnic" meal is usually part of the fun and, personally, I have always found a better appetite for this kind of meal than for an ordinary one taken indoors. After meals, a cigarette or pipe and more talks, or perhaps a quiet spot with a book, just as your fancy takes you, with the knowledge that you are always within touch of friends and kindred spirits.

In conversation there is freedom from conventional restraint without objectionable license. There is a spirit of practical helpfulness, too. If you need assistance in erecting a tent or hut, willing volunteers are at hand to give it. Usually the work of clearing and improving the sites is undertaken by members themselves, and this offers excellent opportunities for developing the communal spirit.

All the social advantages of any ordinary club are attained in a Nudist club, with the

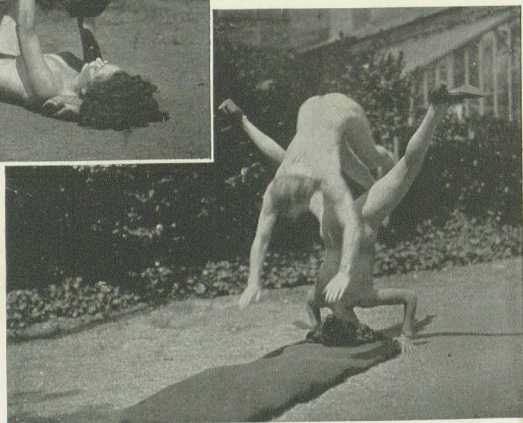
addition of this delightful freedom of body and spirit, and that is why Nudism may be considered as a social force.

There are comparatively few clubs in this country as yet, but they are growing rapidly, both in numbers and in size, and I think there can be little doubt that this expansion will continue for some time to come. Compare these conditions with those of the individual who, through foolish prejudices or lack of understanding, endeavours to take his sun-bath in solitary seclusion. It must be carried out clandestinely, and this in itself must imbue him with a vague sense of guilt—a feeling that he is doing something of which he might well be ashamed, since if his neighbours were to see him he would certainly be ostracised, even if he escaped legal prosecution. His solitude leads to introspection, and he may begin to wonder if indeed there is not some atavistic impulse behind it—some throw-back to distant primitive or savage ancestors. And if he persists after this feeling is once aroused, he is on the way to complexes and neuroses which will do him more harm than the ultra-violet and infra-red rays will do him good. If he attempts to perform physical exercises, it is more than likely that



AMATEUR GYMNASTS,

of both sexes, capable of putting up an excellent "show," may be found in most Nudist Clubs.



they will have so little spirit in them as to be valueless. He cannot play games without someone to play with. He will miss that vital spirit of camaraderie which is characteristic of every Nudist community. He may, perhaps, practise Nudism in his home, indoors, free from alien observation and criticism; but still the psychological effect is the same—unless he has Nudist friends who will join him and turn the affair from a solitary one into a social one. Then he will be gaining some of the advantages of a Nudist club and forsaking his idea of individualism.

Some men may be willing to attend Nudist gatherings by themselves, but dislike the idea of other men seeing their wives in a state of nudity; or some wives may adopt a similar attitude. Such people will not, nor ever should, become Nudists. If the question of sex is to obtrude, self-consciousness will mar any enjoyment of the freedom which Nudism offers.

It must be realised that when men and women are together without clothes, this bogey exists only for the abnormal. I speak from experience. I have never visited a Nudist community without my wife, and I have certainly derived more enjoyment from my visits

when I have seen the delight and complete unself-consciousness of my three children, freed from the trammels of conventional coverings. Children, almost invariably, make good Nudists—providing, of course, that their little minds have not previously been warped by whispered injunctions and admonitions.

Is it not rather significant that the “grown-ups” have fears and doubts and disgusts regarding the exposure of the human body from which the children are free? Does it not mean that they read into something which, in itself, is perfectly harmless certain ideas which come from a mind which has been sullied by unworthy thoughts or experiences, since they enjoyed the same state of innocence and purity?

I am convinced that children brought up amongst Nudists will be better able to preserve this pristine purity than those who are left to learn the differences in sexual anatomy by surreptitious discussions in school corners from imperfectly enlightened school-fellows. So far as I have been able to observe, these differences make no impression at all on the child mind when no emphasis is laid upon them. They seem to be taken as a matter of course, just as much as the difference

between a horse and a cow. Even in adults, once the initial ice has been broken, I believe the same sort of feeling, or lack of feeling, is induced. The novice may have fears that he or she will be gazed at with curiosity not untinged with pruriency, but it does not take more than a few seconds to dispel this fallacy in actual practice.

One of the real advantages of social Nudism is that it completely disposes of a lot of nonsense which is thought and spoken about the unclothed figure of the opposite sex. There is a great difference between observing an isolated individual of the opposite sex unclothed and watching a large group of the two sexes all perfectly at ease and quite indifferent to the fact that they are nude.

In order that there may be no possible misunderstanding as to what I mean by "social Nudism," I should like to make it clear that I refer to the equivalent, apart from the lack of clothing, of such social gatherings as tennis clubs, dances, family reunions and similar meetings for mutual enjoyment.

Whilst as tolerant, I hope, of other people's peculiarities as I wish them to be of

mine (and we all of us have little peculiarities of some kind), I have not the slightest sympathy with those who wish to make Nudism part of their religion, such as the Adamites and Doukhobours, referred to in my first chapter. I thought the former had completely passed out of existence, but I am informed that there are still some survivors and that they have established a "Garden of Eden" near Papeete, on the island of Tahiti in the South Seas—one of the "Isles of the Blest." In this Garden, however, no Eves are allowed—possibly for fear that they might cause another "Fall," even though (according to the Guide books) there are no snakes or serpents in these enchanting islands.

The Doukhobours, a fanatical Russian sect, have many undesirable characteristics, amongst them being their attitude towards their women. If reports be true, they harness women to ploughs and other agricultural implements and use them in place of horses or other draught animals.

Although both of these misguided sects go without clothes, they have not the slightest connection with Nudists such as those with whom it is the purpose of this book to deal.



Nudism has nothing to do with religion, any more than golf or cricket or football, and the idea of going without clothes altogether is admittedly as impracticable and undesirable as living without a house or eating nothing but uncooked foods. The recognised Nudist is, on the contrary, a very practical person, and will wear a wig and gown in Court if he is a barrister, or regulation uniform if he is in the Navy or Army. It is essentially to enjoy the opportunity to free himself from conventional clothing *on occasions* that he joins a Nudist club. Clothes are not doffed for the purpose of outward significance, but for personal comfort and pleasure, and what comfort and pleasure may be gained in this way can be fully appreciated only by those who have had actual experience.

Having practised both, I can say with confidence that there is no comparison between solitary sun-bathing and social Nudism. Strange as it may seem to the uninitiated, one is far less self-conscious in a community of Nudists than naked and alone. The fact that all one's companions are in the same state makes nudity seem quite insignificant, and the knowledge that their ideas on the subject are in harmony imparts a feeling of

confidence and satisfaction unknown to the solitary. There is no boredom, such as may creep in when one has nothing to do and no one to talk to. There is an unquestionable broadening of the mind by the exchange of opinions and experiences, and since narrow-minded and ignorant persons are not likely to be found in a Nudist community, mental alertness is maintained at a high level.

Of course, Nudists are not all cast in one mould. Just as there are physical differences between individual members, some short and some tall, some fat and some thin (as in any other society), so there are psychological differences. Although I have not met any fanatics so far, I have met vegetarians, teetotallers and non-smokers. I think in every case they have adopted these creeds purely as a question of health, and their attitude has been one of tolerance towards those who differ from them.

On one occasion I and my wife and a friend were confined, by a heavy rainstorm, to the tent of a lady whose husband was a "Nature doctor." After a time, my craving for a cigarette grew so strong that, with some misgiving, I asked if she would mind my smoking in her tent. She laughed and said

if I was so silly as to want to poison myself with a narcotic it was entirely my own affair and would not affect her in the least.

I have one Nudist friend who feels the same regarding alcohol, but he has accompanied me in an hotel where we have chatted over drinks, mine alcoholic and his non-alcoholic.

It has been said that the true proof of tolerance is to be tolerant of the intolerant, and I think this will apply to practically all Nudist groups. They do not get angry because those who understand nothing of the movement condemn it. They simply pass over such criticism with good-humoured indifference. They agree that for some, for one reason or another, Nudism may be unsuitable; but for kindred spirits they have always a warm welcome and a sincere desire to make the novice entirely at home as quickly as possible. And, judging from personal observation and experience, they are remarkably apt at doing so.

CHAPTER IV.

SUBORDINATION OF SEX.

I T may seem a little inconsistent, after expressing my regret that "sex" has been so much emphasised in connection with Nudism, to devote a chapter of my book to this subject; but it is an aspect which has to be considered and one which is the least understood by ignorant critics of the movement.

The reader may notice that I have chosen the title "*Subordination of Sex*," which is a very different thing from the *suppression* of sex. If I may indulge in a little further apparent paradox, I would say that what we suffer from to-day is a combination of too much suppression of sex and too much exaggeration of its importance. On the one hand we get a hypocritical pretence that no such thing exists, and on the other that it is the one vital factor of our existence. Both pretensions are equally absurd. No normal person is wholly insensitive to the influence of sex. Some of the highest attributes of human

nature—unselfishness, tenderness, self-sacrifice, self-respect and ambition are all developed by it. I believe a healthily-sexed individual leads a fuller and more intelligent life than one under-sexed.

Sex often gives inspiration to artists, whether painters, writers or musicians. And it is an absolutely natural phenomenon; we should none of us be here at all were it not for the almost miraculous powers of sex. Why, then, should children be brought up in ignorance or deception concerning the very cause of their existence and what may prove to be one of the most vital factors of their later life? Why should adolescents and adults regard it as a subject fit only for innuendo and secrecy? Far more harm is done by forcing thoughts and conversations on the subject into submerged channels than clean, healthy discussion in the open could do.

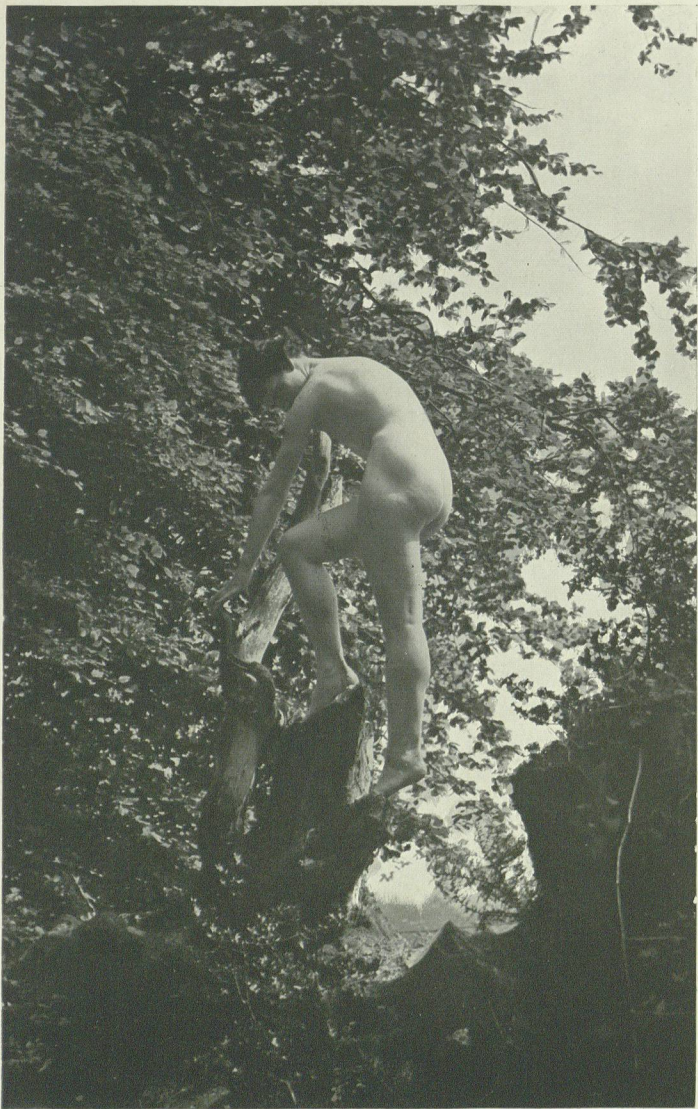
It may be that, to avoid dangerous consequences, the immature mind needs guidance and the unformed character support in responsibility, but ignorance lends no assistance to either, and the suggestion that sex is unclean or wicked is a distortion of facts which may lead to incalculable harm. On the other hand, undue insistence upon the importance

of sex may lead to obsessions which are physically and psychologically disastrous. One of the most illogical and ridiculous of sex conventions is the idea that it is shameful and dangerous to expose certain parts of the human body. Anyone—child, adolescent or adult—can observe the sexual organs of an animal without any sense of indecency. Even an old maid may have her pet cat or dog and remain unshocked by the exposure of the whole of its body. The truth is that there is nothing indecent in the sight of a naked man or woman, except the convention which gives rise to the idea. Those who have been brought up to regard the nude body in this way may be shocked or agreeably titillated at the sight, according to the condition or calibre of the mind. They may be affected in the same way by a picture or a statue. It may be taken as axiomatic, however, that complete nudity has actually a chastening effect in contrast with semi-nudity or provocative styles in dress.

In my young days it was regarded as rather a "thrill" to see a lady board an omnibus and expose her ankles and a few inches of lacy petticoat; but a few years ago, when knee-length skirts were common, no one

took the slightest notice of about a yard of silk stocking containing a shapely leg. Convention decreed that such an exhibition was quite "decent" and so no one was offended and, in fact, no one was interested. It is the same in a Nudist gathering. Where everyone is nude, no one is conspicuous. Curiosity is disarmed, and with it pruriency and impure thoughts. To the children the exposure means nothing at all, because there is no associated significance; the adult experiences a freedom from "complexes" and the accentuation of sex, which is a feature of modern dress. As a correspondent in *The New Statesman* pointed out some time ago, there is no "thrill" in nakedness. If we can once convince the opponents of Nudism of this, perhaps they will then realise that there is no "harm" in it.

It would be a poor appreciation of the subject to leave it at that. A merely negative attitude is both unfair and unintelligent. Nudism is actually an antidote to hyper-sensitiveness to sex. The artificial glamour and excitement with which the subject is generally surrounded is largely dissipated by association, unclothed, with members of the opposite sex in games and exercises. A truer sense of



proportion and perspective is gained. It has been urged that association of the sexes without clothing in groups and teams must destroy appreciation of sex altogether; but this is just as absurd as thinking that it leads to unbridled license. It does neither. It simply puts sex in its proper place as a natural function, without unnatural stimulus. All animals are familiar with the outward bodily appearance of each other, but this does not prevent them from mating in due season and taking a keen interest in their progeny. "Are we to lower ourselves to the level of animals?" a critic may ask. Certainly not; but in this particular respect we may at least desire to be as free from artificial stimulus to the sexual urge. Animals are completely free from the influences of "spicy" revues, salacious jokes, night-clubs and prostitution. If association in the nude excited sexual feelings it would, for obvious reasons, be impossible for a single Nudist club to remain in existence. If it destroyed the natural impulses of sexual sympathy and rendered those who practise it sexless, it would not appeal to the thousands of husbands and wives who are enthusiastic Nudists to-day.

There is, in all normal persons, a per-

fectly natural desire for the company of the opposite sex, apart from love or lust. The sexes are complementary to each other, and many delightful friendships can be formed on a basis of comradeship and community of interests. This is the sort of thing which is fostered in a Nudist club. The inevitable slight difference in point of view adds interest and liveliness to a discussion between opposite sexes, and each can gain something from the conversation of the other. With all ideas of sex relegated to the background, instead of being aroused by frocks and frills designed directly or indirectly to that end, such a happy consummation is more easily and more certainly attained.

Artificial stimulus to sexual thought is almost always caused by curiosity and anticipation. The semi-nudity displayed in some stage-shows or cabaret entertainments and in Continental bordels are deliberate attempts to arouse eroticism, and to the unsophisticated these devices do undoubtedly act as a stimulant; but complete nudity is a different thing altogether, and in suitable environment has not the least erotic effect. The question of semi-nudity on the stage was very adequately dealt with in a statement issued recently and

signed by Miss Edith Neville, Chairman of the Stage Plays Committee, and Mr. Howard Tyrer, Secretary of the Public Morality Council. After expressing the concern of the Council at the growing practice of extreme undress on the stage, the special committee gave their views as follows:—"Even if it be contended that the diffusion of sex knowledge, together with present-day customs, have lessened the effect of this development on impressionable minds, the Committee still strongly maintain that *there is no legitimate comparison* between nudity or semi-nudity in art schools, bathing, sports or normal environment and that which is displayed in the emotional atmosphere of a crowded theatre and sometimes exploited in scenes of sexual interest or association. In the opinion of the Committee, such representations, by their lack of modesty and the frequency with which they occur, are calculated to excite sensuously impressionable minds and, in the opinion of a number of members, will tend to degrade audiences which include couples of opposite sexes, and particularly those of an age susceptible to sex influences."

It will be noticed that the Committee said "there is no comparison" between nudity

in normal environment and that which is displayed in the emotional atmosphere of a crowded theatre. Many people, by the way, are under the impression that the nude female form is only to be seen upon the stage in Paris. Actually, nude females have been exhibited upon the stage in New York and our own West-End of London. I mean *nudity*, not semi-nudity or figures covered with "fleshings," which are now so common as to awaken no comment. I would suggest that an immediate and extensive increase in the ranks of Nudists would be the biggest blow it would be possible to give the exploitation of nudity or semi-nudity now relied upon by so many theatrical producers to keep the box-office busy. Probably few, if any, of those who patronise such shows would wish to join a Nudist organisation; but if some of them did, it would be from very different motives and with very different results. Just imagine a number of men with their wives and children who are happy in a Nudist camp attending these performances and what their reactions would be! When men foregather in most clubs there is, almost inevitably, an exchange of so-called "funny stories," but I have never heard anything of the kind in a Nudist club,



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“ SUNFLECKED ”

Photo by Walter Dru

nor do I know of any Nudists who have. There are many other things to think about: games, work, the progress of the club and the movement in general, and news of other members and other clubs. Introspection is not encouraged, and morbid minds are ventilated and rehabilitated. I do not wish to imply that "sex questions" are taboo. They are discussed on occasion, but in a wholesome and matter-of-fact way as ordinary business or domestic affairs might be discussed. Where minds are free from artificial restraint, good manners are essential to the enjoyment of such freedom, and if woman's influence is ever felt in this respect, it is enhanced by the fact that the company is unclothed.

It will be seen from what I have said that, so far from the intermixing of sexes in a state of nudity leading to licentiousness or the augmentation of sexual passions, it has exactly the reverse effect. I know it is difficult for some people to realise this, and probably nothing but practical, personal experience would convince these; but if they have any friends who are Nudists, a little reflection should enable them to judge whether such are of the type to whom undesirable sex associations are likely to appeal. Particu-

larly if these friends have families, I would like them to observe the demeanour and conversation of the children. Children are an important factor in the consideration of this subject. We know with what success they have been brought up in apparent ignorance and seclusion. The late Dr. Mary Scharlieb, that grand old dame who carried on her practice till she died at a ripe old age, said when writing on this subject:—"It is certain that the conspiracy of silence which has lasted so many years has brought forth nothing but evil." In every school, whether of boys or girls, there will be school-fellows ready and eager to impart sex knowledge as they understand it. Verbal initiation will very likely be supplemented by obscene drawings of a very crude type and a somewhat distorted introduction to human anatomy. Children whose parents have taken them amongst Nudists will be immune to the ill effects of such instruction. Instead of having the thrill of a somewhat "naughty" adventure, it will seem merely silly and uninteresting. They will have more accurate knowledge than their teachers and familiarity with the sight of nakedness will make them indifferent to undesirable presentations of it. Young men and

young women are apt at times to let their imaginations dwell upon sex, even though it may be more or less subconsciously, and here again the practice of Nudism is beneficial. Mere physical attributes partially revealed will cease to excite curiosity, and a train of thought leading to eroticism, once the whole of the body has become familiar by sight. Stage and cinematograph shows and pictures designed to arouse dormant eroticism will lose their power in the exploitation of sex by the exposure of either feminine or masculine figures more or less unclothed. For these reasons Nudism does subordinate sex without in any sense repressing it, and by so doing is favourable to health, psychologically as well as physically. Since persons with abnormal sexual tendencies are unlikely ever to become Nudists, I do not think it is necessary or desirable to give consideration to their possible reactions.



CHAPTER V.

WHY THEY BECOME NUDISTS.

A GREAT many of the uninitiated must wonder how and why people become Nudists. Some of my friends have asked me "what sort of people" one meets in a Nudist club or what "Nudists are like." My reply has been that Nudists are exactly like the people one meets in an omnibus or on an Underground train or in the street. In other words, they include all types, and there is nothing to distinguish them from non-Nudists. As I said in the last chapter, they are usually more given to thinking and reasoning than the average individual, but there is nothing in their appearance or manner to stamp them as Nudists. As to how and why they join the movement, that will best be explained by quoting a few examples personally known to me. The great majority have been attracted

in the first place by reasons of health. As I know more about my own case than I know of any other, and more than any other can know of it, I will tell you first about myself.

As a boy I was always fond of the open air and freedom in the way of clothing. During one year of my boyhood I spent the greater part of my time with the local fishermen, helping them with their boats and gear, and being rewarded with sailing trips and odd scraps of information which I hoped would one day prove useful to me. Like so many boys of that period, my ambition was to become an apprentice in the Mercantile Marine. My parents did not share this ambition. For one thing, I was told, I was much too delicate and could never stand the hardships. I am afraid I was rather an argumentative child, and I certainly was inquisitive. I decided to put the question of my hardiness to the test. On most of my trips I wore a cricket shirt (well open at the neck), a pair of old flannel trousers, socks and sand-shoes. This was my garb, summer and winter, when I could manage it without getting into trouble. At night I generally slept nude, covered with a single blanket. Once, as a test, I waited until everyone was fast asleep and then climbed

out of my bedroom window and down a rain-water pipe, and spent the night on the sands; returning in time to be found in bed when the rest of the household awakened. I also became interested in gymnastics and physical exercises, and used dumbbells and, later on, a "Sandow Developer." Unfortunately, when I came to London and started life in an office, I gradually lost my interest in physical health, although I was still fond of walking and cycling and bathing. Many years before ultra-violet rays were talked of, I used to tell my bathing companions that I enjoyed rolling about nude on the sunny sands more than the bathe itself, and felt it did me more good. In my new life I began to deteriorate physically for some years until I went to Canada and worked on a farm. This revived my interest in health and strength, and I came home very fit. For the next twenty years I settled down once more to an indoor sedentary life except during the War, when I travelled all over the country on Government service and finished up rather a wreck owing to irregular feeding and insufficient sleep. A few years ago I had a bad bout of influenza which led to a nervous breakdown, from which I did not recover for some months. At the time I did

not much care whether I got better or not (a symptom of the complaint, no doubt), but when I did get better, I determined to avoid a similar experience at all costs. A Harley Street specialist said that I suffered from a deficiency of vitamin "D" and calcium, and prescribed a certain branded food containing vitamin "D" and hæmoglobin, amongst other things, and tablets composed of calcium lactate and sodium lactate. Deficiencies in vitamin "D" and calcium usually go together, as the system will not absorb calcium when vitamin "D" is lacking. I began to study my health from this point of view, and realising that vitamin "D" is a "sunshine" vitamin I determined to get as much sunshine as possible. I spent a great deal of time in my garden, and, starting with a tennis shirt and flannel trousers, gradually exposed more and more of my skin to the sun and air. A short-sleeved sports shirt and flannel shorts led eventually to my wearing nothing but a pair of cotton gym. shorts and sandals. My health improved so much that it became a topic of conversation amongst my friends. When winter came I was handicapped, but I bought myself a "sun-ray" lamp and continued the treatment. This was not equal to

the summer exposure in the open air, but it is significant that I, who had suffered badly hitherto, was the only one of the family to be absolutely free from colds for two winters in succession.

The practical benefit I had derived from exposure induced me to investigate the merits of Nudism, and I studied the subject very closely from all angles. I read practically everything that was printed about the subject, and supplemented my reading with personal enquiries wherever and whenever possible. I thought it all out, and then wrote my book, *Naked and Unashamed*. I was not a Nudist then, but the remarkable success of the book brought me invitations to visit various Nudist clubs, and after my first real experience (described in the "Author's Preface" to the second and subsequent editions), I became an enthusiastic Nudist myself. My wife was quite agreeable to the idea in the abstract, but became almost "panicky" when we were on our way to our initiation. We have to thank Mr. J. W. Joseph, the Secretary of the New Forest Club, and his charming wife for our happy introduction. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit, and found, in practice, all the delights and advantages we had considered in

theory only hitherto. Since then we have practised Nudism regularly—outdoors when the weather has been suitable, and indoors when it has been inclement. I shall devote a later chapter to Indoor Nudism, because it really requires separate consideration at some length.

A fellow member of one of our clubs, an Australasian—a big, well-built man who looks to be about fifty years of age, although actually over sixty—told me that in his childhood it was usual for him to bathe with his brothers and sisters in a river running through their farm. They used to undress in the house and then run down to the water completely nude. When they reached adolescence, however, they developed a certain amount of self-consciousness, probably induced from outside sources, and the girls and youths used to take their bathing separately. No costumes were worn either for river or sea-bathing, and they all used to delight in the freedom of a sun-bath. For some years he practised as a gymnastic instructor, sun- and air-bathing in the nude whenever opportunity offered; but in later life he reached a weight of 17st. and felt himself getting out of condition. He took up exercises and sun- and surf-bathing again,

and reduced his weight to 12st. 2lbs. To prove that he really had regained youth and health, he shipped from Auckland, N.Z., in the engine-room of a steamer and arrived in London perfectly fit and "as hard as nails." Considering that he must have been over fifty years of age at the time, it was a really remarkable "come-back." In England and America he missed his previous opportunities for nude bathing and sun-bathing. He said that in the open-air baths in Sydney, N.S.W., provision was made for nude sun-bathing on two raised but enclosed platforms (one for men and one for women), and there were many places along the coast where a quiet spot could be found for nude bathing. It was nearly ten years from the occasion of his last sun-bath before he learnt of a Nudist club, which he then joined with great satisfaction. He now looks a picture of health and at least ten years younger than his age.

One young man told me that he gained his first experience of Nudism in South Africa. He had been keen on keeping himself fit by boxing, skipping and general exercises, and he was fond of swimming. Some friends invited him to their bathing pool, where they swam and sun-bathed without costumes, and

one morning he went to this pool—a basin in the rocks, partly natural and partly hewn, on the coast. He did not quite like the idea of bathing nude in company (although they were all of the male sex), but returned later in the morning expecting to find the pool deserted. It was, except for an elderly man lying naked upon a towel and sun-bathing. After a few minutes' consideration my friend decided that if it was good enough for the old gentleman it was good enough for him, so he stripped off his clothes, dived in, and after a swim and a little skipping, lay down on the rocks himself as naked as his neighbour. He enjoyed his experience so much that he became a regular visitor at the pool, and often he bathed and sun-bathed in the nude in the little coves and beaches around the coast. He had no experience of mixed Nudism until he returned to England, when he joined a Nudist club. He is now fortunate enough to possess a large and secluded garden of his own in which he can play and work without worrying about wearing clothes.

Another young man was interested in the Scout movement, especially camping. Owing to a nervous breakdown he was advised by his doctor to “take things easy” and to give



up his evening work with the Scouts, which had been somewhat strenuous. He did not want to give up camping, but felt he was not justified in enjoying the benefits of the Scouts' camp when he was no longer working in their behalf. A very conscientious young man, it will be observed. He investigated some camping clubs, but did not like them on account of the artificial atmosphere with which they were imbued. Then he saw an advertisement of a Nudist camp, joined it, and has been an enthusiastic Nudist ever since. On making the acquaintance of a young woman, newly joined, I was intrigued to find that she had been studying the Nudist movement for about a year when she read my book, which finally decided her to take the plunge and try it out for herself. She was quite alone when she joined, but she immediately became one of the large family and now looks forward to her Sunday in camp as the event of the week.

I had the privilege of transporting one couple from the railway station to the camp on their first visit, and I could see that in spite of their apparent good spirits they were bordering on a state of "nerves." I completely ignored this and treated them as if

they were members of old standing, without any open attempt to put them at their ease; with the result that they arrived at the camp with every appearance of sang-froid. They told me afterwards, however, that on reaching the clearing their courage nearly failed them and they wished themselves at home again. Everyone treated them as old friends, and by lunch-time they were thoroughly at home and enjoying themselves immensely. Although a visit involves over two hours' travelling each way, they have been regular attendants at the camp ever since and they say they know of nothing more enjoyable. As a contrast, one friend brought a young lady with him on another occasion and she showed not the slightest embarrassment. She was athletic, well-read and generally charming. On arrival she went with my wife into our tent and they came out together undressed, one just as much at home as the other. I could hardly believe that this was her first experience of the kind, but she assured me that it was and she could not see anything to get excited about. It seemed quite a matter of course to her.

One young engaged couple who had done a lot of sun-bathing in swimming costumes

saw an advertisement of a man and wife inviting a young couple to join them in sun-bathing at their bungalow. They answered the advertisement, met the advertiser at a small village in Surrey and were taken home to tea. There was a small swimming pool in the garden and the host invited them to join in a dip, explaining that he and his wife and little daughter bathed without costumes, but the visitors could please themselves. They followed the example of their host and realised for the first time the advantages of bathing without clinging, clammy costumes. Afterwards they spent a number of very happy week-ends at their host's bungalow near Rye Harbour, and eventually went with him and his wife to a woodland club. They became confirmed Nudists and are now members of a club near London with both indoor and outdoor facilities. Another man was engaged in a Government Department when, in the course of his duties, he came in contact with some copies of an American Nudist magazine. He was interested and spent a short holiday with his small son at a seaside resort where nude sun-bathing was possible. Then he joined a regular club, and his wife, after one visit, decided to accompany him.

I can only give a few examples, but from the foregoing it will be seen that Nudists are recruited from all classes for all sorts of reasons. Many have found it difficult to give me any really concrete reason other than that they always "liked to be without clothes" whenever possible. In the case of ladies, they have generally been introduced by friends, either lady or gentleman. Not unnaturally, perhaps, they seem to be more convinced by lady members than by gentlemen. Although books and magazines may have a great deal to do with forming definite opinions on the subject, I think in most cases the inclination to be free from clothes in the sun and air has been more or less inherent though latent. Indeed, in my experience, it seems that this freedom is just a natural desire in most people suppressed through training and environment. All parents know that small children love to be naked and are only prevented from shedding their clothes irresponsibly by instruction and supervision. Again, although I have met a number of people, of both sexes, who have regarded their initiation as somewhat of an ordeal, in nearly every case the doubts and fears have been the result of introspection and imagination, and dispelled



immediately upon coming into contact with the realities.

I feel I should not conclude this chapter without reference to Mrs. Marian Lili, the indefatigable Secretary of the National Sun and Air Association. I believe she was the first woman in England to practise Nudism in mixed company. She has told me that the movement really started at the Welsh Harp, Hendon, some five or six years ago, when a small band of men decided to bathe without costumes. They obtained permission from a farmer to use a piece of land adjoining the lake for undressing and dressing and to lie and dry in the sun. Subsequently it was decided to invite a few ladies to join them, one of whom was Marian Lili, whose husband was already a member of the original group. She went and she found several ladies all wearing costumes, but as she had come prepared to be a real Nudist she decided to go through with it and divested herself of all clothing and took the water completely naked. Her example was soon followed by the other ladies, and this group formed the nucleus of a Society which subsequently became known to the world as "The National Sun and Air Association." Needless to say, she is bringing

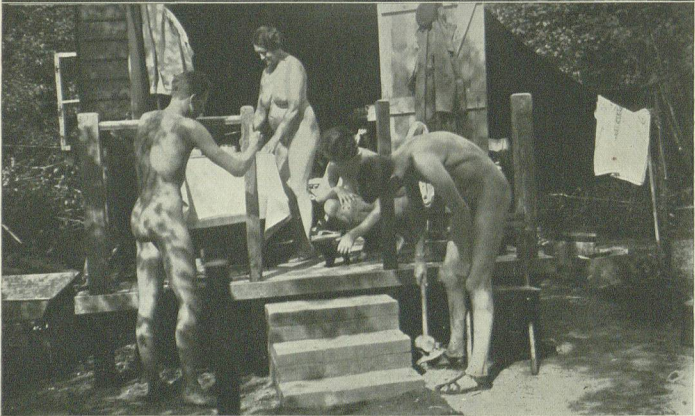
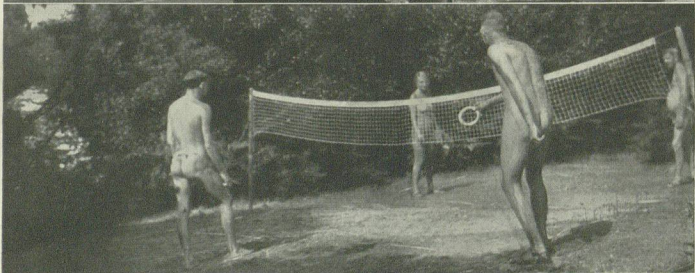
up her three little daughters as whole-hearted Nudists, and all who have seen pictures of them in the Daily Press will agree that she has cause to be proud of them.

CHAPTER VI.

CLUBS WE HAVE VISITED.

I HOPE you will have noticed that I have headed this chapter "Clubs *We* Have Visited." Although I was prepared to undergo my initiation on my own responsibility and without moral support, my wife decided that she would "steel" herself to the ordeal and accompany me. Since then, I have never even contemplated a visit without her. The only occasion on which I lacked her moral support was when, about three years ago, I made my first and abortive investigation of a Nudist club.

As I have explained in the preceding chapter, I was drawn to Nudism by the highly satisfactory results of sun-bathing experiments in my own garden, and having noticed an advertisement constantly recurring in a weekly periodical, I wrote for more detailed particulars. The prospectus was excellent. Having spent some twenty-five years in the business of Advertising, I regard myself



were strong enough to prove beneficial, one would, presumably, have to wear darkened goggles to protect the eyes, and I could not quite visualise a game of Badminton under these conditions. How was it worked? Was there a powerful "sun-ray" lamp at each corner of the room, or strips of quartz glass tubing containing mercury vapour run round the cornice? And what form of heating was employed? My host looked at me as though I was somewhat of an eccentric and explained that the "Nudarium" was illuminated by ordinary electric light bulbs and heated by means of a coal-fire. I was distinctly dashed. He endeavoured to reassure me by saying that a "sun-ray" lamp was provided for those requiring "treatment" at a small charge per treatment. I was interested. What type of lamp? Was it a quartz or mercury lamp or carbon arc? The reply was that it was "a proper 'sun-ray' lamp—just like real sunlight," and I began to realise that he knew far less about artificial sunlight than I did myself. Apparently most of his clients were indifferent or ignorant regarding the various types of lamp, and this was quite a side-issue. I asked how many, approximately, members he had, and the reply was astounding. "I

haven't the faintest idea! Probably hundreds." I was shown a small amateur photograph of "a corner of the Nudarium," which appeared to be a sort of cubicle enclosed by ply-wood partitions, and when I asked if I could inspect the premises—not, of course, when in use by members, but at some unoccupied time—I was told: "Not under any circumstances whatever!" Finally, I asked what was the procedure if I did decide to join, and I was told that I could send along a subscription and I should receive full instructions as to the address ("somewhere in the West-End") and could go along at once. I did not join. This was different from anything I had expected, and I came to the conclusion that Nudism might be all right on the Continent, but was out of place in England.

I am glad to say that subsequent experiences proved that I was wrong. For the time being I gave up all idea of participating in Nudism actively (unless I could make a trip to Germany or France) but I continued my interest in the subject and, arising out of various discussions, I wrote *Naked and Unashamed*. This, as I said in my Introduction, "is not intended to be used as a text-book by students. Nor is it a tract to be used as

propaganda either for or against Nudism." It was a consideration of the subject from the Historical, Moral, Health, Psychological, Aesthetic and Commonsense points of view which would enable the reader to judge for himself (or herself) the merits of the movement. The book was an immediate success and brought me letters from all over the world. One was an invitation from Mr. J. W. Joseph to visit the New Forest Club. The letter was sincere and gave an impression of soundness. As I have said, I was prepared to act according to my convictions and had but slight qualms regarding my initiation. When my wife said that if I was going she would come too, I pointed out that we should probably be expected to discard our clothing and appear in the "altogether" like the rest of the community, and she began to vacillate. Could she wear a bathing costume? I did not know, but would ask Mr. Joseph. His reply was that she could wear what she liked, but he was confident that she would soon want to be like the others. We were received by Mr. Joseph at his charming home set in the verge of the New Forest, and after a few minutes' chat, taken along to the club. After parking the car, we were led to a high door

with a Yale lock, and as the door clicked behind us, I, at least, felt we were in a new world. The die was cast; we had taken the irrevocable step. I may say that I carried a small attache case in which reposed a bathing costume for my wife and a pair of swimming shorts for myself in case we should feel unequal to "going the whole hog" at the last moment. They were never used. As we stood on the steps of the pavilion a lady, wearing nothing but a broad sun-hat, came up and was introduced as our host's wife. I had thought that where all were nude there would be no feeling of embarrassment, but for the nude and the clothed to meet called for a greater degree of sang-froid than most people possess. To my subsequent surprise, I did not think of it at all at the time, there was not the slightest trace of embarrassment in any of us. Here was a man fully clothed introducing a husband and wife, hardly known to him, also fully clothed, to his wife, who was entirely naked. We, who had never seen an unclothed person of the opposite sex other than one another met nakedness in a social setting, so to speak, and . . . it all seemed perfectly natural. Mr. Joseph and his wife are charming people. It was, perhaps, owing

to this, even more than our own dispositions, that we felt at home immediately; and when Mr. Joseph asked his wife to take mine to the ladies' dressing-room, the latter walked off with complete nonchalance; and when next I saw her, she was sitting in a deck-chair completely nude and animatedly chatting with her hostess as though she had been used to such situations all her life. The bathing costumes were forgotten.

The New Forest Club was only opened in May, 1934, but it has made rapid progress and offers attractions such as no other club I have seen possesses. Although it is situated in picturesque woodland (partly virgin forest, I should imagine) it has company's water laid on, gas and electric light. Hot meals can be had in the pavilion, and I understand that since my visit a bathroom has been installed with hot and cold water supplies. Even the huts in the woods have electric lights installed, and yet the apparent anomaly of a woodland camp with urban appointments seems perfectly harmonious. There is one large clearing in front of the pavilion for social gatherings, another for Badminton, and another for "Tennikoit," while swings, see-saws and a sand-pit are provided for the

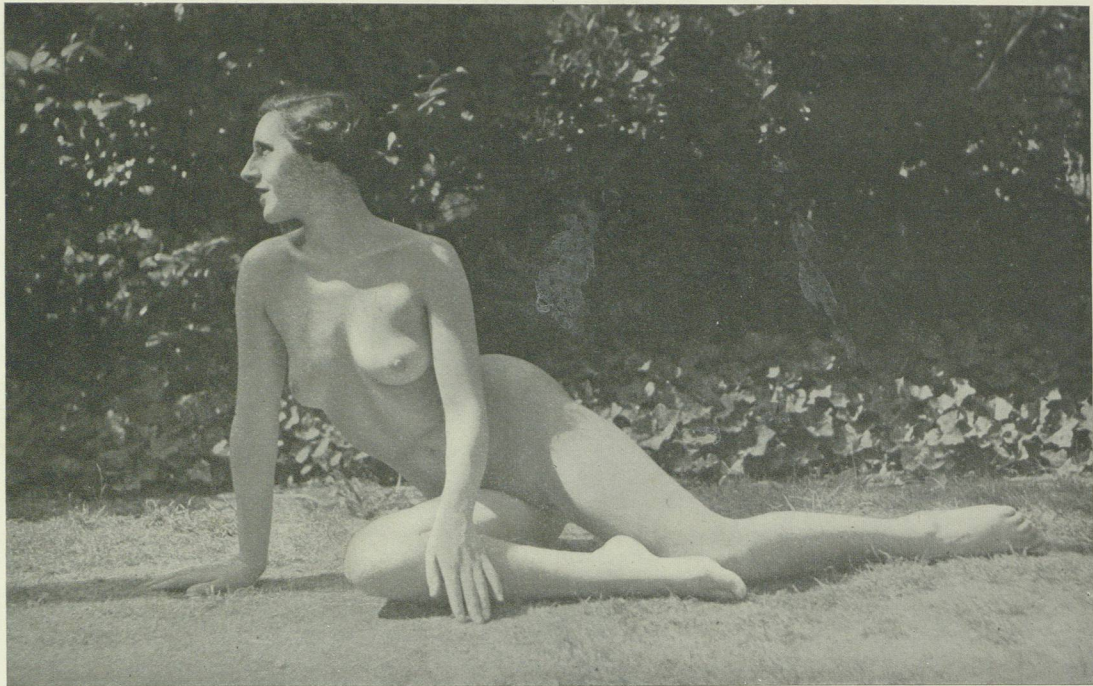
children. A number of children had been left in the camp by their parents, but we did not see them as they had been taken on a trip to Bournemouth by Mr. Lloyd, the co-proprietor and resident manager of the Club, who lives in a house adjoining the woods. The Club is a proprietary one, owned by Mr. Joseph and Mr. Lloyd, but the internal management and discipline is in the hands of a Committee elected by members, a system which seems to work quite satisfactorily. The subscriptions are rather high, and the members, very carefully selected, include Naval and Military officers, Doctors (of both Medicine and Science), Clergymen and businessmen such as solicitors and bank-managers. Amongst the "miscellaneous" members are three town-councillors and a high-school bursar. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and came away confirmed Nudists. Had we lived within reasonable reach of the Club, we should certainly have become members.

Our next invitation was to attend the Conference of the National Sun and Air Association, held by the courtesy of Mrs. Bedingfield at the Lotus Club, N. Finchley. This was most interesting, as delegates came from clubs in all parts of the country, and

the amazing variation in type made one realise what a widespread movement Nudism had become in England. The meetings were held in the grounds of the Club, with the table and chairs for the Chairman and his lady Secretary set under a cedar tree. I was rather amused, at first, to see a nude chairman presiding over a meeting with most of the audience reclining on the ground in a state of nakedness—especially as the proceedings were conducted with the formality and solemnity characteristic of an old-fashioned political or even religious meeting. I had received a shock, too, when ascending to the dressing-room I encountered two young men tripping down the stairs completely unclothed. I had scarcely considered the possibilities of indoor Nudism, and as I looked through a doorway and saw a nude violinist accompanied by a nude pianist, I did feel a little like "Alice in Wonderland." Nakedness in the woods under shining sun and blue sky seemed perfectly natural, but nakedness indoors was another matter. We soon grew used to it, however, when we noticed how perfectly at ease all the other visitors were. And there were about 150 of them altogether. As the sun descended it began to get a bit

chilly, and there was some laughter as a young girl dashed into the house and came out with a couple of rugs—one for herself and one for the young man beside her. Soon after, most of us sought shelter in the house from the keen wind which blew up; and we settled down to tea in a large lounge with a cheerful fire blazing in the grate. I was impressed with the general friendliness of the company. Complete strangers seemed to drop into engrossing conversations and discussions as easily as if they were members of one family, and I suppose that, in a sense, was what they were. Some of the resolutions proposed (and carried) at the meeting were rather ambitious and I doubt if many of them will be realised, at least for some years to come; but “Unity is Strength,” and I think the feeling of mutual support induced an optimism and assurance which otherwise would have been lacking.

We met and talked with so many people that we came away with our minds confused, but we had arranged to pay a further visit to the “Lotus” the following week to see what it was like under normal conditions. “Lotus” members formed but a small proportion of the gathering during the Con-



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“ RHODA ”

ference. I must refer to one striking and enlightening incident which happened before we left. As I came downstairs after dressing, I brushed against a man standing by the newel-post, and as I looked up to apologise I saw it was a business acquaintance I had been out of touch with for a year or more. This was a coincidence, but the oddest thing about it was that this man was a very strait-laced individual whom, I imagined, would have been shocked had I told him that I had written a book on such a subject as Nudism. Yet here he was at a Nudist Conference, and I soon learnt that he and his wife had been members of a Nudist club since the beginning of the season! Our early days of Nudism were full of surprises like this.

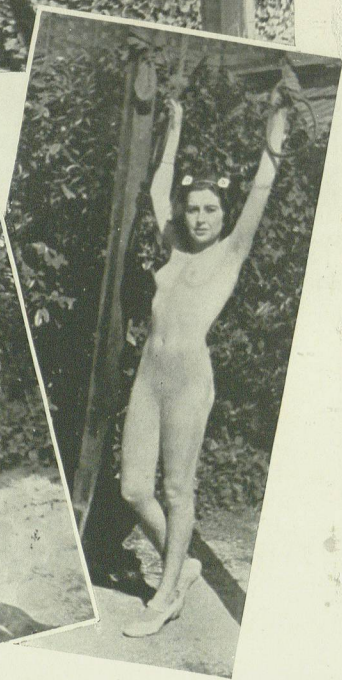
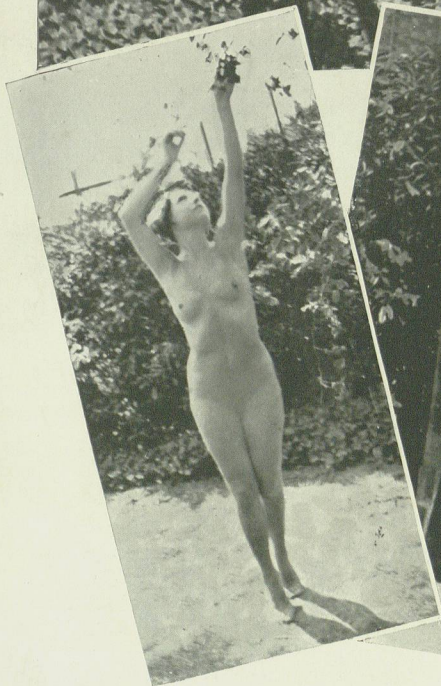
On our next visit to the "Lotus" we found quite a different atmosphere. All the members seemed old friends and we felt "at home" immediately. As the weather was uninviting we had our first experience of entirely indoor Nudism. We helped ourselves to a variety of sandwiches, all fresh and dainty, and the charming young lady in charge served us with tea. We chatted with our neighbours freely and they all seemed above the average in interest and intelligence. Be-

lieving that one of the main objects of Nudism is untrammelled exercise, we adjourned to the "Sports Room" for a game of Badminton. Neither of us are expert or experienced players; but the "all in" rules were a revelation. The room is not big enough for an orthodox court, so these rules were conceived by some ingenious individual to make a spirited game possible. If the shuttlecock hits the ceiling, the walls, or curtains at either end, it is taken on the rebound as if it had come direct from the opposing player. This sounds easy, but in practice the tyro has a poor chance against the seasoned player. According to these rules it is permissible to catch the shuttle on the racquet, bounce it and return it. All sorts of complications ensue which might exacerbate a real player, but are quite enjoyable for those who seek fun and exercise. Here also we experienced the delight of playing table-tennis free from clothing, and enjoyed it so much that we later had a table made for use at home and became fairly enthusiastic players. Only those who have played this game strenuously can have any idea of the amount of exertion involved, and the constant stooping to pick up balls is in itself a form of physical culture.

Which leads me to our first experience of "physical jerks." Later in the evening a call was raised for the "beginners' class." My wife and I, with other members, returned to the Sports room, which had been cleared for action, and found an assembly of about twenty persons of all ages and both sexes. Our Mentor was a young and feminine counterpart of a Guards instructor. It soon became obvious that this was a serious matter, and while her vocabulary lacked the spice and picturesqueness of that of an Army sergeant, it was incisive and all-embracing. She herself appeared to be made of whale-bone, and I am afraid the ease with which she performed the exercises made it difficult for her to realise that some of the apparent slackers were really doing their best. For myself, I was rather too conscientious and suffered considerably during the next few days. I have since formed very definite opinions as to the qualifications of a physical culture instructor and have decided that zeal should be tempered with discretion. Nevertheless, we enjoyed ourselves so much that before leaving we enrolled as regular members, and we have never had any cause to regret our decision. Whenever we visit the Club we find interesting people to

talk to and plenty of amusing and invigorating exercise.

At the Conference we became acquainted with an enthusiast in the neighbourhood of sixty years of age, but with the liveliness and agility of a vigorous schoolboy, and we received from him an invitation to visit his club near Windsor. Soon afterwards we met him, by appointment, at Waterloo and proceeded to Windsor. It was a miserable day. Leaden skies and steadily soaking rain were enough to damp the enthusiasm, literally, of any but the very keen. Our somewhat elderly friend, however, had sufficient vim for all of us, and we soon became infected by his sprightliness. Arrived at Windsor, we did a little shopping in the way of fruit and other comestibles, and then boarded a motor-bus which deposited us within a mile or so of our destination. After a long walk up a road that was little more than a cart-track, we reached a farm, and above this, on a wooded hillside, lay the camp. It really was a camp because, with the exception of a communal hut where various odds and ends were dumped, the only accommodation consisted of tents. We were lucky. Our friend introduced us to a lady who owned (with her husband, who was a Nature Doctor)



a large and almost luxurious tent. Here we lunched and spent most of the afternoon. We saw little of the other members, of whom very few were present, and although our friend offered to disrobe if I wished to "go Nudist," we saw nothing even suggestive of Nudism. I can imagine, however, that this camp, high on the side of a hill with a carpet of pine needles underfoot and its pure bracing air, would be ideal on a hot summer day. We fully intended to pay another visit under more favourable conditions, but, up to date, we have not found an opportunity. We did have one little excitement. Our friend's spirit lamp heated a bottle of methylated spirit standing near it, with the result that the cork blew out with a terrific explosion, and instantly a wall of fire ran right along the front of the tent. I had visions of our being trapped in the tent until we were all enveloped in flames, but the coolness and presence of mind of both our friend and our hostess averted such a calamity, and within a minute or two the fire was extinguished and the total damage found to be negligible.

Our next visit was to "Yew Tree Camp," the sun-bathing "park" of the "Sun-bathing Society." I had been looking forward to

meeting Mr. N. H. Barford, the founder; but, unfortunately, he had had a slight accident a few days previously and was confined to bed with a twisted ankle. After a steady climb through some steep woodland we arrived at a gate and a sort of lodge-hut, the door of which (after our ringing a loud bell) was opened by an amiable young lady, fully clothed. We were requested to fill in a form containing a sort of questionnaire which was almost like the "third degree" in print, and were then taken to the dressing-rooms. The Sunbathing Society is one of the veteran clubs, and I believe that at its inception it was *de rigueur* for the men to wear trunks and the ladies to wear slips and brassieres. Theoretically, complete nudity is confined to the "family enclosure," but we saw only one lady in the original uniform, and the only other form of clothing was that of a gentleman who was introduced to us by the lady secretary (who in the meantime had doffed her frock) and who was somewhat unconventionally clad in a sports jacket and nothing else. Again we found friendliness and interesting people to talk to. We did not join in any of the games, but we amused ourselves with a medicine ball and envied the members disporting

themselves in the swimming pool. We did not indulge in a "splash" ourselves, partly because the day was overcast and chilly, but more particularly because we had not provided ourselves with towels. Our acquaintance in the sports jacket introduced us to his wife and told us, in a rather amusing way, how they became members. A neighbour and his wife, with whom our friends regularly played bridge, had induced the gentleman to accompany him to the "park" to see for himself what it was like, and although he agreed rather reluctantly, he enjoyed himself so much that he decided to become a member providing his wife was willing to accompany him. The wife was positively horrified by the idea, but after many discussions at the bridge parties, was eventually persuaded to make a trial. On the eventful morning she wished to recant, and when their friends called to fetch them she was in such a state of semi-collapse that the husband had to give her a stiff whisky and soda before he could get her into the car. At the "park" he introduced her to one or two people and left her for a few minutes while he had a look round. When he returned she was all alone and looking a picture of misery. All she wanted to know was how

soon they could go home! He argued that she had not yet given it a fair trial and got her to chat with one or two more members, and when she seemed to be settling down to it more happily he left her again. On his second return he found her so engrossed in animated conversation with two gentlemen that she hardly took any notice of him, and from then onwards she became an ardent enthusiast. They spent their summer holidays at a Nudist holiday centre in Devonshire. There is no indoor accommodation at "Yew Tree Camp," so as the sun sank and we found it getting even more chilly, we returned to the dressing-rooms, donned our clothes, and said good-bye with the hope, mutually expressed, that we should soon meet again. We noticed several tents and learnt that quite a few of the members made a practice of spending their summer holidays at the camp under canvas.

Until now, all the Clubs with which we had been in touch were, with the exception of the "Lotus," too far away from home to justify our becoming members, and we searched, for a time in vain, for an Essex club. We had heard, vaguely, of the "Diogenes" and other clubs near St. Albans, Herts.; but our



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SEA MAIDEN

Photo by Bertram Park

own county seemed "off the map" so far as Nudism was concerned. And then we were introduced to "The Essex Sparta." Here we found, after a tramp across three big fields, a wood of about $12\frac{1}{2}$ acres with a fair-sized central clearing. We were introduced to the members present, about a couple of dozen, by our Christian names, and endeavoured, more or less unsuccessfully, to remember theirs. This system of identification becomes rather complicated when there are two or three Erics, three or four Johns, and several Bills and Bobs. They were a jolly crowd and soon made us feel at home. I enjoyed the thrill of seeing one lady member absorbed in my book with two young men also reading it over her shoulder. We played ring tennis and were taken for a tour through the woods by the Secretary and other members, and we voted it charming. On the edge of the clearing was an improvised fireplace presided over by the Secretary's wife, and although we had brought sandwiches and thermos flasks, we were glad to avail ourselves of the freshly made tea she hospitably offered us. The weather was kind to us on this occasion and we sunned ourselves on ground-sheets and chatted with various members in turn. By

the time we had to get ready for our return we had decided to become members, and we arranged to come back on the following Sunday with our three children. This we did, and although it was their first experience, the children took to it "like ducks to water." We became so enthusiastic that the following day we bought a small sectional garage to serve as our woodland home and I planned out various fixtures and fittings, including a locker-seat, shelves and similar conveniences. We found willing hands to help us erect the hut when it arrived, and we laid in a stock of crockery and cooking equipment with a view to spending some of our summer holidays on the spot. We already had two tents which the children used when sleeping in the garden at home. Fate was against us. Bad weather prevented us from getting very far with our preparations, and at the end of the year the farm was sold and the new owner refused to renew the lease under which the site was held by the Club.

In the meantime, we had attended the reopening of the "Gymnic" Club, an entirely indoor organisation, although members were offered facilities for visiting one of the outdoor clubs near St. Albans. Being in the

nature of a "reunion," everyone seemed in high spirits and games were organised in the room set apart for sports and exercises. This was really two rooms made into one as the house (situated near Olympia) was of the large old-fashioned type in which the ground and first floors consist of two rooms divided by folding doors. The "games" were of the children's party variety, but they induced great activity and hilarity, and were followed by even the middle-aged with great keenness. Two sides, each consisting of an equal number of both sexes, were chosen by the two captains, and, to begin with, they sat on the polished floor with legs stretched out in front in opposed ranks. Then one "umpire" dropped an air balloon between them and each team tried, with the use of only one hand and legs kept on the floor, to strike the balloon over the heads of their opponents. If it touched the ground on the other side, it scored a "goal." Another competition consisted in a sort of relay-race in which one gentleman balanced a balloon on a plate, ran the length of the room and handed the plate and balloon to a lady awaiting it, who, in her turn, ran back and transferred it to the next gentleman, and so on until the whole

line had participated, the winning side being that which completed the sequence first. These and some of the other games played might seem a little childish in cold blood, but the excitement was maintained to a remarkable degree and the activity of the players was a thing to wonder at. As usual, we met many interesting people, including the lady assistant secretary, who had visited several Nudist centres in Germany, and a young German girl who acted as physical culture instructor. The latter was one of the most enthusiastic participants in the athletic games, actually jumping up and down with suppressed excitement. We were shown all over the Club, which comprises four floors, including the basement, and is equipped with hot and cold baths and showers, and a mercury-vapour lamp which emits powerful ultra-violet rays, supplemented by the infra-red rays of a bulb lamp fixed above it.

Having, by this time, become acclimatised to "indoor" Nudism, we experienced no surprise when one of the Sparta members invited those for whom it was convenient to meet weekly at his house for general discussions, and after one or two meetings an excellent physical culture instructor was intro-

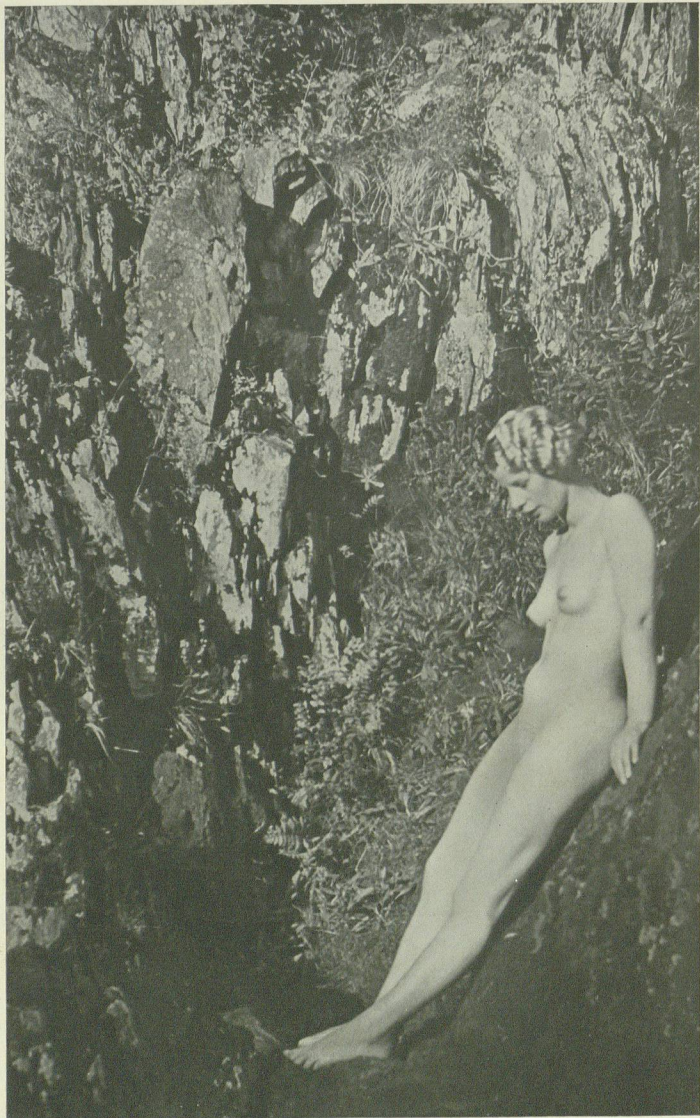
duced who gave us an hour's training each week with very excellent effect. He worked hard in spite of having already done a full day's work in a West-End Gymnasium, and he certainly knew his job. Merciless with slackers, he "tempered the wind to the shorn lamb" and seemed to know exactly how much each pupil could stand without "overdoing" it. I have to thank him for fitness during the winter months which otherwise I never should have enjoyed. As spring advanced it was decided to discontinue these weekly meetings, notwithstanding the willingness of our generous host to continue his hospitality; but immediately after this two members who had been energetically searching for a new site were successful in finding a charming little wood of about six acres, which forms the present home of the Club. It is a fairly thick wood composed of small oaks, ash, beech, and quite large hawthorns—almost ideal for our purpose, but of no value at all, as far as I can see, for anything else. On our first visit we were shown "where the clearing will be"; but it all looked the same to us, and we nearly lost ourselves in trying to find a way to get out. The following week-end a marvellous transformation took place. Trees

were topped and the toppings dragged to the boundary to fill up weak spots ; then the trees were cut down, and finally the roots dug out. I think the members who contributed so energetically to this work (I may say that my family and I took a share in it) would have shocked any Trade Union with their hours and their vigour. By Whitsun we had a clearing larger than that of the old camp, three huts erected and the boundaries fairly well consolidated. On leaving the original site I had had my own hut brought home, where I completed my fittings and finished up with painting it inside and out, and as I found transport a very expensive item where huts were concerned, I decided to purchase a tent for my wife and myself, which could be used for us to sleep in and as a rendezvous for the family in case of bad weather. The children had their own tents for sleeping in, supplemented by fly-sheets which I had specially made for use away from home. Our first night was almost a tragedy. We had not had time to get everything properly organised and whenever we wanted anything we had to move almost everything else to find it. About three o'clock in the morning my wife and I were unable to sleep for the cold, in spite of our

sleeping-bags. I put on a pair of flannel trousers and a jersey (over my pyjamas) and my wife piled some clothes on the outside of her sleeping-bag. Then the storm broke, and between flashes of lightning and crashes of thunder we listened to the rain falling down in sheets. Our tent, with a fly-sheet, kept perfectly dry, but we found in the morning that the two smaller children (whose fly-sheet had not been fixed) had been nearly washed out, and my elder son in a small tent by himself had had a rivulet diverted by a small furrow into the head of his tent. With the morning sun and a mixed odour of wood-smoke and bacon frizzling over the camp-fire, we soon forgot our troubles and enjoyed a hearty meal. Needless to say, we were better prepared for the next night, and although it rained heavily, we were all quite comfortable. The comradeship to which I have previously referred is considerably enhanced by camp conditions, and this was very definitely demonstrated by our first experience at the Essex Sparta camp.

This chapter is growing over-long, but I must just say a word or two about the "White House Sun, Air and Sports Club." This, as the lady and gentleman directors

were at some pains to impress upon us, is not actually a Nudist club, but a residential club which offers facilities for sun-bathing in little or no costume, according to individual choice. The Club House itself is a large building which can accommodate thirty guests so far as sleeping is concerned, and a great many more for mere meals, which are served either *a la carte* or *table d'hote*, again according to choice. Except on the sports ground or by the swimming pool, members must be clothed in at least a bath-robe or swimming costume. The swimming pool, by the way, is the most ambitious I have yet seen in a Nudist club. It measures 45ft. by 25ft., is purified by a constant stream of running water and is flood-lit at night. One needs to be a little of a mountaineer to be thoroughly at home at the "White House," as it is perched on a steep hillside and is approached from the private road which leads to it by two long flights of steps. The Badminton and Miniten Courts are on one level, the swimming pool on another, and the hard-court for tennis (under construction during our visit) on another. Here and there between the trees dormitory huts or chalets peep, and the views from all parts of the



CLUBS WE HAVE VISITED.

house and grounds are delightful. I gather that while some of the guests and members are non-Nudist on entrance, there are few, if any, who fail to appreciate the advantages of complete freedom from clothing after a little while.

There are still one or two clubs which I wish to see and which I hope to visit during this summer; but I think I have written enough to give the uninitiated reader a general idea of the variety and constitution of British Nudist Clubs and the rapid progress of the movement as organised in this country.

CHAPTER VII.

MY IDEAL CLUB.

ON our way home from our initiation, my wife, who had been very dubious as to how she would feel when the "psychological moment" arrived, said: "I have made up my mind! We must start a Club of our own!" I was rather taken aback at this complete reversal of her previous attitude, but agreed that I, too, felt like that. I pointed out, however, that it was not quite so simple as it might seem. Questions of finance, responsibility and method would need to be very carefully considered, and it was out of this consideration and subsequent discussions that this chapter was evolved. Much water has flowed under the bridges since then, and we have visited many clubs and gained a good deal of experience. As a result, I offer my ideas to those who contemplate forming a Nudist Club, and even those who are now running such clubs may find some of my

suggestions helpful, or at least provocative of thought.

The first thing to consider, I think, is the constitution of the club. At present there are three different forms adopted. The proprietary club, conducted entirely or mainly as a financial investment; the "communistic" variety, where a number of enthusiasts combine to acquire a suitable site which individually none of them could afford; and a sort of compromise where the proprietor provides the necessary capital and takes whatever profit may accrue, while leaving the general management to a committee elected by the members themselves. In most cases these methods seem to work with equal satisfaction. Personally, I think there are drawbacks to all of them. The purely proprietary club, however sincere the proprietor, does offer opportunities of criticism by the ill-informed, who may suggest that the whole thing is a ramp or a "money-making racket." Unfortunately, this criticism is only too well founded in one or two instances. And it is not easy for the general public, guided only by specious advertisements, to discriminate between the worthy and the unworthy. The communistic type is usually formed by enthusiasts without much



capital, individually or collectively, and necessitates *renting* a site and providing most of the amenities by voluntary labour. Estimable as this may be in the abstract, it has many disadvantages. Primarily, insecurity of tenure is liable to cramp development. It hardly seems worth while to expend great effort in improvements and general development of the site when the tenancy may be discontinued at the will of the landlord. It more or less precludes the trouble and expense of making a swimming pool, for instance, and is likely to make the members content with "make-shift" amenities. My own feeling (and I will say, quite frankly, that the proprietor of a very successful club has assured me that my idea is impracticable) is that the ideal club should be a combination of proprietary and communistic. I consider it essential that the site, or premises, should belong to the club, and this requires that sufficient capital shall be available for purchase. Such capital cannot be raised merely by subscriptions. Many clubs nowadays insist upon entrance fees, and I believe that if instead of entrance fees a purchase of shares could be arranged, capital could be provided and the club formed on a co-operative or profit-sharing basis. I

know there are difficulties. I am not a financier, but I am convinced that these difficulties could be overcome. As a matter of fact, I know of a quite important golf club that was started in exactly this way.

Now suppose we start with very modest subscriptions, such as two guineas for a single man, one guinea for a single woman, and two-and-a-half guineas for a married couple (including children under eighteen years of age). Each member would, in addition, be required to take up not less than one share of £1 par value with the option of acquiring such number of shares as might be available. This £1 share would be a different thing from an entrance fee; it would be negotiable, and on a member wishing to leave the club it could, perhaps, be disposed of at a profit. Those who really believed in the movement would regard it as an investment and take up as many shares as their purses would permit. Given reasonable security, there should be no difficulty in raising capital, and with capital such amenities could be provided as would increase membership and solidify the assets of the club. If the club were properly conducted it should show a profit, and this profit, distributed amongst the members, would auto-

matically reduce their subscriptions and even, for the larger shareholders, provide an income. Is this altogether Utopian? I do not think so, and I hope one day to be able to put it to practical proof. I regard this question of capital as of vital importance and consider it essential that reasonable amenities should be provided at the outset. The mere provision of a piece of ground where it is possible to discard clothing is, in my opinion, not worthy of being called a club and offers very little attraction to potential members. It is a vicious circle. Amenities cannot be provided without money, money will not be forthcoming without subscriptions, and subscriptions will not be offered without amenities to attract them. Of course, it is not likely that the desideratum would be achieved right away. Amenities cost money, and money could scarcely be expected to flow in until something concrete could be shown in the way of security. The articles of association would have to provide for the devotion of a good proportion of capital *and income* to general improvements. Obviously, the initial capital would have to be provided by a nucleus of shareholders with definite plans for development as the funds available increased.

This brings us to the consideration of what an ideal club might offer, realising, of course, that development would take place *pari passu* with increase of income. First must be found a suitable site. This should be woodland composed mainly of small trees and thickets to afford satisfactory screening from the public. Not less than five acres should be available, with possibilities of extension. Some clubs are screened by wattled hurdles or woven board fencing, but I regard this as unsatisfactory inasmuch as it is a sort of advertisement that something is being hidden behind them and it is likely to arouse curiosity and suspicion. If the woodland is fairly thick, I would run strands of barbed wire *just inside the boundary*, where it would be inconspicuous from a little distance, and then inside this I would fill up gaps and thin sections with underbrush. If necessary, in places I would use hurdles or woven boards *inside* this, so that the inner parts of the wood would be secure from outside observation without any special protection being noticeable by the passer-by. If the freehold were acquired it would be quite worth while to plant a belt of quick-growing trees and shrubs near the outer barrier. In the centre



would be one large clearing suitable for community games and exercises, with smaller clearings for badminton or ring-tennis courts. Although a soft, springy lawn is delightful to play on barefooted, it will not stand continual trampling by crowds of people, and so I would have the exercise ground and courts liable to hard wear covered with a few inches of fine sand which could be raked smooth and even periodically. Sloping green swards could be provided for passive sun-bathers. A pavilion of pleasing appearance large enough to shelter a good number of members in bad weather with a suitable form of heating would be provided, together with a buffet for tea and other refreshments. Separate dressing-rooms for ladies and gentlemen would be available in this building. A swimming pool is almost a *sine qua non*, and provision should be made for this when laying out the site, even though the initial funds were insufficient for immediate construction. Shower and foot-baths would be a natural corollary of the swimming pool, but pending the provision of the latter, simple shower-baths could be constructed with very little trouble and expense, provided a suitable water supply were available, and this, indeed, may be con-

sidered as one of the essentials of any Nudist club. Members should be allowed facilities for erecting small huts or tents, and it would be an advantage for the club to have one or two of these which could be let to members who preferred hiring to purchasing their own. These should provide a useful addition to the club's revenue. Another essential is suitable sanitary accommodation. The ordinary form of camp latrine is repellent to a great many people, and as the club should encourage the spending of holidays on the premises, weather-proof huts fitted with "Elsan" appliances should be available—one for ladies and one for gentlemen. These should be placed in secluded positions approached by screened paths, at the entrance of which a board should be hung upon a tree or stake, bearing upon one side "VACANT" and on the other "ENGAGED." This board would be reversed upon entering and leaving the path.

Nudist Clubs are not usually patronised merely for the provision of passive sun-bathing facilities, and members expect, and should find, suitable opportunities for active recreation. A qualified physical culture instructor should be present at least during weekends, and he (or she) should be sufficiently

experienced to gauge the physical abilities of individual members and adapt the exercises accordingly. It is not sufficient that a young and well-conditioned instructor should be able to perform the exercises himself (or herself). Consideration must be given to older and less active performers if the classes are to be well attended and enthusiasm maintained. The over-exertion of willing but less supple members is as much a reflection of the instructor's competence as slackness and inattention on the part of others. Psychological as well as physical knowledge should be part of the instructor's stock-in-trade. In addition to classes in physical culture, members will require some more entertaining forms of exercise, and here there is plenty of scope. Badminton, played with outdoor shuttles (with rubber instead of cork bases to steady them in currents of air) or with little woolly balls, is both amusing and invigorating. "Tennikoit" or Ring Tennis is always popular among skilled and unskilled alike, and is a good healthy exercise. Lawn Tennis is a great attraction if the resources of the Club permit the construction of grass or "hard" courts. "Miniten" is an ingenious adaptation of lawn tennis for a small court. It is played with "bats" made from

two discs of ply-wood about nine inches in diameter, fastened together at an angle by a small strip of wood which serves as a handle (somewhat in the form of a wooden gauntlet) and an uncovered rubber ball a little larger than an ordinary tennis ball. Most readers will be familiar with the "Kum-bak" outfit, consisting of a captive tennis ball suspended by elastic strands between two uprights; and there is a similar device with the ball tethered to a swivel on the top of a short post, which gives equally good exercise and amusement. The old-fashioned game of "Stoolball," which is said to be the original form of cricket, makes an excellent community game where space is available; and "Rounders" is an excellent substitute for the more hardy "Baseball." Medicine Balls of varying weights are almost an essential of the well-found Nudist club, although an ordinary Soccer football serves as well for less strenuous members. There is a patent ball of this kind invented by Jack Lewis, the Physical Culture expert, in which the weight can be adjusted by filling or partially filling with water. Archery is by no means an obsolete sport and is very suitable for Nudists. Some fine pictures may be made by amateur photographers of amateur

toxophilites, poses with the bow giving excellent effects. Bull-board as played aboard ship by throwing little circular bags filled with sand upon a board with numbered squares, needs but a very small outlay to make an effective game. Clock Golf is popular and inexpensive. Indoors (during bad weather) Table-tennis, Darts, Chess, Draughts, Dominoes, Cards, and even "Shove-ha'penny," help to pass the time pleasantly. The above are only a few of the many forms of entertainment suitable for a Nudist club, and readers will, doubtless, be able to lengthen the list as desired; but I do think that having attracted members to a club it is desirable to give them every possible facility for healthy enjoyment.

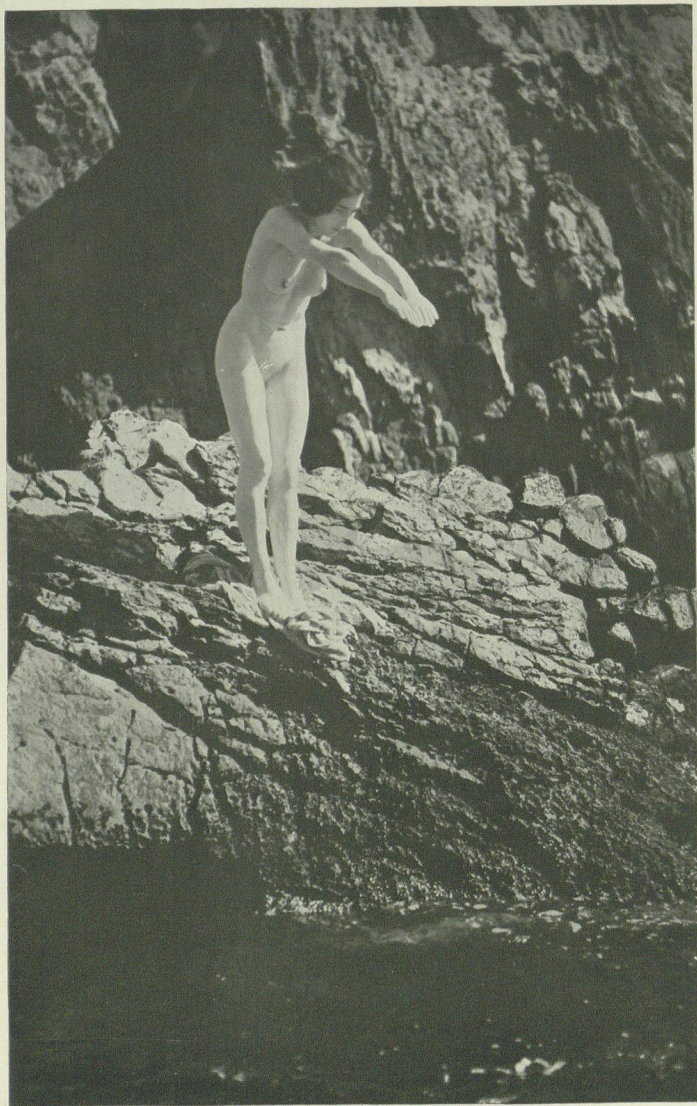
Although a Nudist, I do not subscribe to the "Back-to-Nature" philosophy. I believe in making things as comfortable and gay as possible while enjoying the freedom offered by a sun-and-air bath. There should be a plentiful supply of deck-chairs and sun-lounges, and the canvases of these should be bright and cheerful. Last summer I found my own deck-chairs were looking rather weather-worn, so I painted all the frames with bright-hued enamels (scarlet, orange, sky-blue, jade green and daffodil) and fitted new canvases to har-

monise with each different colour. The effect of these on the lawn on a sunny day, with a white-enamelled garden seat and table, was extraordinarily cheerful, while the cost was negligible. Wind-shelters made from gaily-striped awnings might add still further to the effect.

No club can be complete without members. The selection of these is all-important, not less so than the selection of the site itself. Quality should come before quantity, and there should be no hesitation in turning down applications from any who fail to measure up to the club's standard. "Subscriptions at all costs" is a policy doomed to failure and, perhaps, catastrophe. In this connection there is the problem of applications from single men without a partner of the opposite sex. There are some clubs which refuse to entertain such applications at all; others which demand a heavily-increased subscription for a single man. The first I regard as arbitrary and undesirable; the second as a rather feeble compromise. It certainly seems that ladies are less ready to apply for membership than men, and that something has to be done to ensure a reasonably even balance between the sexes. But I cannot help thinking that the

differentiation in fees savours somewhat of bribery. No doubt single girls generally earn less than single men, and this may be some excuse. If subscriptions are low and the attractions offered are well worth what is asked, why should not the ladies establish the equality of their sex? After all, there are far more women than men in the world. Is it just feminine modesty that holds them back? In that case, the amount of the subscription should not influence them. If some men are of such a type that they are willing to pay a higher fee for the privilege of beholding feminine pulchritude unclad, then they should not be admitted at all. I believe that in some of the clubs in Germany, France and America, the fees are exactly the same for either sex. Perhaps the movement is not sufficiently advanced here to make this possible; but I should like to see it tried out. The effect on the general public would, I am sure, be good. I remember when I first received the prospectus of a Nudist Club in England, my suspicions were immediately aroused when I saw "Subscriptions for Single Men, £2 2s. 0d.; for Single Women, 12s. 6d." I thought it looked "fishy." "Why," I asked myself, "this distinction? Is it to lure suffi-

cient young and good-looking females to make it worth while for the men to pay £2 2s. 0d. for the opportunity of meeting them?" Good Nudists will laugh at me, and I know better now, but that is a quite natural inference for the uninitiated. It is reasonable to make a reduction for married or engaged couples, because in these cases the whole of the cost usually falls upon the man. As regards single men, I think such cases should be decided upon their merits by a Committee of Club members. There must be thousands of fine, clean-living young men, interested in physical culture and a healthy outdoor life, who have no fiancées or girl-friends with whom they are sufficiently well-acquainted to propose a joint subscription to a Nudist club. To some girls such a proposal might be considered as a doubt of their chastity. Such young men who would be an acquisition to any club are at present either barred altogether or penalised financially. I can see no reason why, if a club is outstandingly attractive, girl members should not act as propagandists and bring in *their* girl friends. As from one girl to another, the proposition would bear an entirely different complexion. There can be no satisfactory excuse for a married man wishing



to join without his wife (or a married woman without her husband). It is a rule with at least one club that a married man wishing to join without his wife must produce to the secretary "her written permission"! Apart from the childishness of such an idea, it is likely to give a totally false impression. I know of one instance in which a married man produced such a document (*not* by request) and a day or so after, the secretary received a letter from the wife stating that her husband was not at all a suitable person for a Nudist club and the "written permission" had been forced from her by threats. I have been told of another case (with the assurance that my informant was personally acquainted with the couple) of a woman whose husband was unwilling to practise Nudism himself, but used regularly to take his wife to a "park" in the morning and come back to fetch her in the evening.

All clubs must have rules, but I should make these as simple as possible with a minimum of "verbotens." They would be so framed that all decent people would automatically agree with them without feeling harshly restricted. I would ban alcohol, but not tobacco. Members would be either nude

or segregated to an enclosure where trunks, slips and brassieres or bathing costumes were worn. Genuine, proved Nudist members would be permitted to don shorts or wraps when the weather was chilly or in the early morning or evening, but semi-undress would be regarded as an impropriety, and all dressing and undressing would be confined to the dressing-rooms. Photographs would be taken only when those likely to be included in the picture had definitely expressed their approval and any use of prints for commercial purposes would require special permission from the Committee.

I would allow members of good standing to bring as guests prospective members for whom they could vouch, without any charge whatever; but I would see that this privilege was not abused. Every week-end or public holiday, when a large number of members might be expected to congregate, at least one member of the Committee would be on duty as Warden and all new members would be met at the entrance, by a fully-clothed member, and afterwards informally introduced to the community with more personal introductions to individual members with whom he was likely (in the opinion of the introducer)

to harmonise. I would take every possible precaution to sift applications for membership, but once elected I would use every effort to make each member feel welcome and perfectly at home. With the exception of the physical exercises, there would be no "organised" recreations. Games would be left to individual selection and friendly arrangement. I think the German "systemisation" unsuitable to English temperament.

This is but a very bare outline of my idea of an "ideal club," and many of its features are already in existence in some clubs; but some of them will be new to some readers and, as I said at the beginning of this chapter, at least provocative of thought which may lead to still better organisation. Actually I have described my ideals only so far as they are simple and practical. If I were to give rein to my imagination I should go much further.

I would like to find a small manor house with a high-walled garden leading to a picturesque wood with a little stream running through it, which would be diverted to the swimming pool so that it ran in at one end and out at the other. The pool would be constructed of concrete, but the edges would

be camouflaged with natural rocks so that it had the appearance of a tarn or burn with a little waterfall at either end and shelves of rock from which to dive instead of the usual rather unsightly platforms. Members who sought home comforts would find them in the house, which would be provided with hot and cold baths, electric light, central heating and modern sanitation. The main hall would be roomy with a big open fireplace, and made comfortable with easy chairs and lounges. There would be a billiard-room with full-size table, a room for music and dancing, and another for badminton and table tennis. Perhaps there would be a large barn which, properly floored and heated and ventilated, would serve as a gymnasium, and at one end of this would be a row of sun-lounges irradiated by mercury vapour lamps, the ultra-violet rays of which would be in conjunction with others emitting infra-red rays. Hot and cold shower-baths would be available at the other end. It would not be impossible to have a removable floor under which was an indoor swimming bath for use in winter by the less hardy spirits. Other members who preferred the primitive would be provided with sites for tents and huts in the woods.



Of course, fresh fruits and vegetables would be grown in the garden. An adjustable stage could be fitted in the barn for amateur plays and concerts. A covered car-park with a few lock-up garages would be provided for motorist members. Alternatively, the Club House might be situated on the top of a cliff with a thick wood in the rear and in front a path cut in the face of the cliff leading down to a rock-bound cove, completely self-contained, with a level sandy floor with sea-bathing available at all stages of the tide. Canoes and sailing dinghies could be provided for those capable of using them. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility for the two alternatives to be found in combination, though I fear that this is not likely within easy reach of London. Such an elysium is more likely to be found on the coast of Devon, Somerset or Cornwall.

Should the day come when I can form a club of my own, I hope, with the assistance of my wife, to improve considerably on the rough lines laid down here. At least I am sure that such an undertaking offers almost unlimited scope for imaginative and carefully-planned organisation.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARTIFICIAL SUNLIGHT.

IT is not surprising that the first of all religions was sun-worship. To primitive man the source of all life and heat was the sun, and it is difficult for us, with so many means of heating and lighting our homes, to realise how much the sun must have meant in those early days to our somewhat child-like ancestors, who had to endure the fear of darkness and the misery of cold when the sun had set. Actually, primitive man was not so very far from the mark because all light, with the exception of electric light, is derived from the sun. The first artificial light was, presumably, a wood fire made from vegetable fibres which had absorbed the rays of the sun, without which they could not have existed. Coal fires and gas-lighting, again, were produced from primeval vegetation which had stored up sun-energy for, perhaps, millions of years. Every schoolboy knows that moonlight is simply the light of the sun reflected from the surface of

the moon. Photo-therapy, the cure of disease by sunlight, was employed by the Babylonians, Assyrians and Greeks, but it was not used scientifically until some time in the eighteenth century. The study of light through the ages led to the experiments of Sir Isaac Newton with the prism, which proved that sunlight was composed of coloured rays. Some hundred years later, Herschel discovered that there were rays outside or beyond the edge of the visible spectrum which radiated heat, although they were invisible because they were without light. These rays became known as "infra-red," and in 1801 J. W. Ritter discovered further invisible rays at the other end of the spectrum described as "ultra-violet" rays. These rays are cold rays, but possess qualities which produce very remarkable effects. All these rays are, of course, included in natural sunlight providing they are not filtered out by intervening substances. In 1855 a Swiss doctor started an institution for curative sun-baths, and he was soon followed by doctors in other countries. It was not until 1919, however, that it was proved that rickets could be cured more rapidly by artificial ultra-violet rays than by natural sunlight. It has been found possible to procure a much greater

concentration of these rays by means of an electric lamp and also to isolate them from other rays. There are two distinct types of lamp for producing artificial sunlight—the mercury vapour or “quartz lamp” which emits concentrated ultra-violet rays, and the “carbon arc” lamp which produces all rays of the visible spectrum and even the invisible ultra-violet and infra-red rays. In the first type, light is produced by passing an electric current through a quartz-glass “burner” containing mercury which is vaporised and forms an arc or flame emitting ultra-violet rays. The “burner” is made from quartz because ultra-violet rays will not penetrate ordinary glass, which acts as a filter. The property of allowing such rays to pass is the basis of “Vita glass,” which can be used for windows, shelters and similar requirements. Many people fail to realise that they can sit inside a window or shelter of ordinary glass and scorch in the sun without any ultra-violet rays reaching them at all. The carbon arc lamp does not need to be enclosed and so there is nothing to obstruct any of the rays emitted from the arc.

While all who have studied and experimented with sun-rays are agreed as to the

general benefits to be derived, there are two schools of thought as to the respective merits of the "ultra-violet" and the "infra-red." Until fairly recently, the greater credit was given to the ultra-violet. These rays cured rickets, lupus and goitre; were most useful in non-surgical tuberculosis and possessed general tonic qualities of real value. But eminent men have come to the conclusion that the infra-red rays are at least as necessary and some even claim that the infra-red are the more valuable. Such authorities as Sir Leonard Hill, Dr. Saleeby, Dr. Stein and Professor Dixon have pointed out that for various reasons the infra-red rays are as necessary as the ultra-violet. One very logical argument which can easily be grasped by the layman is that the ultra-violet rays being very short cannot penetrate far below the surface of the skin and unless the blood is drawn near the surface may fail to enter the blood-stream. And, of course, we all know the comfort of heat for aches and pains. Hot-water bottles, hot fomentations and poultices are regular "old wives" remedies. Without wishing to rank myself with the great authorities on the subject, I have studied it very carefully and it seems to me that, except in

the special treatment of particular diseases, with which we have no concern here, ultra-violet treatment should certainly be accompanied or supplemented by the infra-red. This, naturally, ranges me on the side of the carbon arc lamp which, if of the right type, gives practically the equivalent of natural sunlight. When I say "of the right type," I should perhaps explain that a carbon arc lamp is essentially an apparatus for holding and adjusting the carbons and supplying them with suitable current. Light is formed by the carbons burning away, and when they have burned so far away from each other that the electric current will not jump across the gap, the lamp automatically ceases to function. Various devices have been invented to allow for adjustment of the carbon points so that the arc of flame is maintained. I had one lamp in which this was effected by an arrangement of electro-magnets which came into action so soon as the gap grew wide. I still have a lamp which is adjusted by hand. When the carbons burn away sufficiently to break the current, or appear to be nearing that stage, the holders are twisted in screw sockets and so brought closer together. So simple is the basic principle of a so-called "sun-ray"

lamp that a young friend of mine made one for himself; or rather assembled it. He purchased part of an old cinema projector comprising a pair of carbon holders with a screw-knob at the back for adjusting the distance between. This he set up on a stand with a home-made resistance for breaking down the voltage and fitted a convex mirror reflector with which the light could be focused very much as a searchlight. We made a very interesting experiment with this reflector. In my youth I read of the Greeks using large mirrors made from metal (glass not having been discovered or invented in those days) to reflect the rays of the sun upon attacking galleys and set them on fire. I was sceptical about this. Experiments with an ordinary mirror, such as all children have carried out at times, suggested that the light of the sun could be reflected on to a distant object, but there was no heat perceptible in the reflection. With the assistance of my friend, we focused the rays of the sun through a double condenser on to the mirror and the reflection concentrated on to a spot on the skin definitely burned it as much as direct rays focused through a small lens or "burning-glass." I am still more than a little doubtful as to the

ability of the Greeks to set ships on fire by these reflected rays, but the experiment certainly proved that heat as well as light can be focused and reflected by a suitable mirror. For medical treatment this method of reflection may be valuable, but for the ordinary person who requires merely the general tonic qualities of sunlight, such concentration is neither necessary nor desirable. Here I would like to make it quite clear that insolation or irradiation at home is entirely a different matter from the treatment of definite diseases. The latter can only be undertaken by qualified medical men with powerful apparatus, which might prove positively dangerous in the hands of a layman. The dangers of "overdoing it" in natural sunlight have already been pointed out, but the danger of an overdose of ultra-violet rays is infinitely greater with a powerful mercury lamp. On the other hand, lamps sold for home use are seldom powerful enough to cure any real disease. Although carbon arc "lamps" are essentially forms of carbon holders, there is a great deal of difference in the carbons themselves. A pair of plain carbons will emit a smaller proportion of ultra-violet rays than the combination of one plain carbon with one iron-cored

carbon, and there are various qualities of carbons containing other metals such as copper and tungsten. The pure tungsten carbon gives the greatest proportion of ultra-violet rays, but the carbons are very costly. There are also both carbon and metal filament incandescent lamps similar to those used for ordinary house or shop lighting, but unless the bulbs are made from special glass the ultra-violet irradiation is negligible. Baths comprising clusters of such bulbs, however, have considerable value and will induce perspiration at a very much lower temperature than a Turkish or vapour bath.

It is not proposed to deal here with the cure of diseases; that is the province of a medical man who has specialised in actinotherapy; but it may be of interest to note some of the diseases in which such treatment has proved successful. Among the most notable are goitre, lupus and rickets; particularly is light treatment valuable as a preventive of the latter when incipient. Some of the most satisfactory results have been obtained in children's clinics, and Sir Henry Gauvain has done invaluable work in this direction at his establishments at Alton and Hayling Island. Excellent results have also

been obtained in respect of many skin diseases, such as acne, boils, chilblains, herpes or shingles, impetigo, pruritis and so on. Anæmia, gastritis, neuritis, lumbago and muscular rheumatism have been treated with considerable success. The most interesting point regarding the treatment of these diseases to the individual who is fortunately free from them is that in nearly all cases general irradiation of the whole body has proved a most valuable adjunct to concentrated local treatment. Dr. F. Howard Humphries says: "In most skin diseases nearly a fifty per cent. advantage is given if general irradiation be added to the local treatment, when there is not only the germicidal and other local action, but the general building up of resistance, which has been found to increase, by half as much again, the probability of success." And again, when referring to the treatment of lupus: ". . . where the nude body and limbs are exposed to ultra-violet radiation in addition to the local application, the percentage of cures is considerably higher." It will be noted that in nearly all cases where light treatment is involved the "building up of resistance," the stimulation of the endocrine glands and the general improvement in the

metabolism play a very important part and regarded as a preventive rather than a cure, this is of utmost importance to those who wish to keep well. It has, moreover, been proved that in foods which have been treated by ultra-violet light the vitamin "D" content has been increased and there seems good reason to believe that the milk of cows and goats which have been irradiated by natural sunlight in the summer and fed upon foods so irradiated, give milk more valuable than can be obtained from these animals in the winter. It may not be generally known that cod-liver oil, so rich in vitamin D, derives its chief value from sunlight. The codfish feeds on minute organisms which have absorbed the rays of the sun and become rich in chlorophyll, that vitalising substance already referred to in an earlier chapter.

Before concluding, I should like to return to the question of the respective values of the ultra-violet and infra-red rays. Natural sunlight is composed of 75 per cent. red and infra-red rays, and since the latter have therapeutic qualities of their own and in addition improve the effects of the ultra-violet, it does seem essential that their aid should be obtained from gas-fire or electric heater, or even a coal-

fire. If using a mercury-vapour lamp I would strongly recommend a general "warming-up" of the skin and self-massage by means of "rubbing" exercises before exposure to the rays of the lamp. Such action will draw the blood nearer to the surface where it may be reached by the short rays and ensure good circulation so that the beneficial effects may be carried to all parts of the system. I am also of the opinion that for general toning-up purposes the open carbon arc, whether double, triple or quadruple carbons are used, is preferable to the mercury lamp. If artificial sunlight is the goal in view it will be more nearly achieved by this means, although it is not possible to secure a perfect substitute for natural sunlight and the open air. Exercises, before irradiation, will undoubtedly improve the effects of the treatment, but here, again, breathing exercises cannot be as beneficial indoors as in pure fresh air. Gas-fires and coal-fires must absorb a proportion of the life-giving oxygen so necessary for complete and satisfactory metabolism and, at best, artificial sunlight is only a substitute for the real thing. I have already explained that sunlight, or its effects, can be stored up for winter months by frequent exposures during

the summer, but the supply can be supplemented and maintained during the winter by artificial means. It must not be forgotten, however, that ultra-violet rays cannot penetrate clothing and the surface of the skin must be bared for them to have any effect upon it. I have proved in my own case that winter irradiation by means of an electric lamp can be most helpful in avoiding colds and the "run-down" feeling which is so common in dark and damp days, and I have a number of personal friends who can testify to similar benefits. The opinion of medical men who have studied and had practical experience of the subject is, I believe, favourable and in many cases enthusiastic. So far as the question of cost is concerned, it will be found very much more economical to purchase a moderately-priced lamp than to pay fees for treatment at a clinic. A small carbon arc lamp can be bought for as little as five guineas and the cost per treatment with such a lamp should not exceed 2d. or 3d. On a power-circuit at special rates a higher power can be employed at even less cost.

CHAPTER IX.

INDOOR NUDISM.

THERE are many enthusiastic Nudists who enjoy the natural sunlight and fresh air of the camps, yet are averse to what is called "indoor" Nudism. This can easily be understood and, at first glance, appears quite logical. They join Nudist clubs for sunshine and health; why should they bother about taking off their clothes indoors? But there are always two sides to every question, and although I once decried indoor Nudism myself, my wife and I became members of a club with indoor accommodation and we have spent many enjoyable hours there. Let it be understood at the outset that I do not claim equable comparison between outdoor and indoor Nudism. I do not think anyone does. Like artificial sunlight, it is a substitute; or perhaps I should say a supplement. I do

not know any members who confine themselves to indoor Nudism. All those I have met are keen outdoor Nudists *during outdoor season*. We hear of Spartan characters who break the ice in the Serpentine or Highgate Ponds and bathe in the open all the year round; but such practices are not for everyone. On the snow-clad Alps, or in the Austrian Tyrol, at high altitudes with dry atmosphere and brilliant sunshine, ski-ing and skating in the nude may be enjoyed by quite average constitutions; but in the damp, dark, chilly days of winter in this country, one needs a hardy constitution and a great deal of conviction to practise Nudism in the open air. What, then, is the alternative? To be satisfied with three or four months' exposure and spend the other eight or nine months waiting for "the season" to come round again? No! The most satisfactory alternative is to enjoy open-air exposure when conditions permit and to exercise, play and generally recreate with the facilities offered *indoors* when outdoor conditions are inimical. I do not think any "indoor-Nudist" would want to waste his or her time indoors when the sun was shining and the outdoor temperature permitted outdoor exposure. The



“ SERENITY ” (top)

Facing page 161

“ ECSTASY ” (bottom)

club I have referred to has both outdoor and indoor accommodation and the latter is only called into requisition when necessary. It must be remembered that Nudism is concerned with more than just the exposure of the body to sun and air. There is the delightful feeling of freedom when exercising or playing games which can be enjoyed indoors as well as outdoors. Just try a series of physical exercises with and without the restriction and hampering effects of clothing and no argument will be necessary to convince you of the advantages gained by the latter. The same applies to a game of badminton or table tennis. So far as the physiological advantages are concerned, you can discover these for yourself in the privacy of your own home without joining any club or exposing your nudity before others. There are other physiological advantages. In the previous chapter I have pointed out that gas-fires, coal-fires and ordinary electric light emit rays which are beneficial when received upon the bare skin. All light and air is good for the body even if it does not equal sunshine and open air. A room can be well ventilated without being draughty and there is no need to feel chilly with reasonable heating facilities and good circulation of the

blood. Indoor Nudism will help the skin to carry out its natural functions. It will also encourage physical exercise with the moral stimulation of group activities. I must confess I am rather liable to sit before a fire with a book during winter evenings and . . . I know of no more insidious influence towards getting out of condition. When our night for exercising came round I thought of excellent excuses for staying at home in comfort, but with some personal effort, and the moral suasion of my wife, I have torn myself from the fireside, got out the car and braved the elements. What with physical exercises and the stimulating effect of the social reunion we returned home different beings. These meetings were carried on at the house of a friendly member of an "outdoor" club with no indoor facilities and was not in any sense an indoor club. It was just an opportunity for members to keep things going until the "season" arrived with the Spring. We did not attend these meetings merely to take off our clothes. No one thought of disrobing until the time for exercises, conducted by a fully-qualified instructor, when we "changed" just as tennis players or cricketers or boxers might do. We certainly sat or stood and

chatted for a little while after exercising before resuming our clothes ; but this, again, was in the same way as one might chat after a game before changing sports clothes for more conventional garb. So much for the merely physical side of the question. I have said that Nudism is concerned with more than mere exposure to sun and air. All Nudists agree that there is a psychological or spiritual consideration which is by no means negligible. It may be taken for granted that no Nudist can see anything indecent or immoral in the unclothed body. To be a Nudist at all, one must have learnt to accept nudity as natural and free from any suggestion of exhibitionism or lubricity. To a Nudist there is nothing provocative or exciting about the sight of unclothed figures of either sex. So why should the fact of being unclothed indoors be any less decent or harmless than in a wood or meadow? The sensation of freedom which comes with the casting of clothes can be enjoyed just as much indoors as outdoors. The opportunity of sitting and chatting in a community of sympathetic spirits is just as welcome, once experienced. As with Nudism generally, this feeling will not apply to everyone. Just as it may be impossible for some

individuals to appear nude before others without self-consciousness, so some people may not feel at ease in a roomful of people all without clothes. But such individuals are not 100 per cent. natural Nudists. Consider the simple and unwarped mind of a child. It can distinguish no difference at all between Nudism outdoors and Nudism indoors. Whatever difference an adult may perceive comes from ideas and conventions which have been built up by training and environment. It is good for all of us to relax occasionally—to get away from the everyday rules and regulations under which most of our time is spent. The spiritual freedom of nakedness is little less refreshing than the physical freedom, and is only a logical extension of the natural instinct (in both sexes) to change into loose and informal attire for the purpose of relaxation. A man is glad to exchange his collar and tie for an open-necked shirt and flannel “bags.” A woman dons a dressing gown or “negligee” and mules. Then relaxation comes naturally and automatically. In these days it has become a difficult matter to relax at will. It is really an art. Nudism is the greatest aid to spiritual relaxation I have ever known. For the tired business man, or woman, to

“drop into the club,” have a warm or cold shower, and then, free from all clothing, to sit in a lounge with a cup of tea and a sandwich and chat with others in the same frame of mind, is refreshing and stimulating. The shedding of clothes may be subconsciously symbolic of thrusting away all cares and worries of the daily routine; but it has a very real and practical effect. As a rule, each newcomer is greeted with a hearty welcome, springing spontaneously from a feeling of sympathy and comradeship. Everyone is subconsciously enjoying the sensation of freedom, yet no one is consciously observant of the fact that his or her companions are nude. The thought simply does not occur, because all are so familiar with the situation and have adopted it with enthusiasm. Burns said: “The rank is but the guinea’s stamp, the man’s the gowd for a’ that.” Here, clothes are “but the guinea stamp” and the true personality of the individual has full play. Politeness is not shed with clothing; naturally good manners do not diminish with nakedness. I have seen staid business and professional men develop interest and charm under the influence of such environment. I have seen middle-aged men become younger

and more vigorous by playing games in the nude which they would have considered too undignified and youthful under ordinary circumstances. And I am convinced that they have gone away from such gatherings rejuvenated and invigorated.

It is difficult for many people to understand and appreciate the enjoyment and improvement in health which may come from indoor Nudism. But then it is difficult for many people to understand and appreciate Nudism in any form at all. I think that such prejudice against indoor Nudism as exists to-day is really the residue of original prejudices against Nudism itself. The old ingrained idea that for the sexes to be grouped together without clothing must lead to immorality or the shocking of modesty, may be put to sleep while the obvious advantage to health of open air and sunshine are present, but without these easily-understood influences there is the feeling that it is not quite "right." I believe that all the people who feel like this would be convinced of their error if they once spent an evening with a group of genuine enthusiasts. In my experience, and from those of others with whom I have discussed the subject, one feels just as natural undressed

indoors as outdoors; it is all a question of attitude of mind. It must not, and cannot be, compared with the semi-nudity of the stage, which is merely an attempt to exploit the latent eroticism of adolescents and incipient roués. Having spent the summer season in a Nudist camp, the sight of a naked body has no disturbing effect upon a normal Nudist. One may notice, and even comment upon, a fine figure or an enviable coat of tan, but such interest will be bestowed quite evenly between the sexes because the sex of a body has ceased to arouse any curiosity or concern. This, really is another advantage of indoor Nudism. The familiarity acquired during the summer is maintained and the freedom from psychological repressions and nervous complexes accompanies it. One feels that while sex is legitimately entitled to an important place in life, it need not be an obsession and certainly without the adornments which accentuate it, one is far less susceptible to its influence.

It is a curious fact that those who know nothing of practical Nudism imagine that the mixing of sexes without clothing must lead to and accentuate sex-consciousness, whereas those with experience know that the effect is

exactly the reverse. It is much the same with indoor Nudism. Among the inexperienced there seems to be a feeling that they would feel awkward and embarrassed in a company of Nudists enclosed by four walls. I think it is one of the advantages of indoor Nudism that such ideas are completely and immediately dispelled in actual practice. If there is anything to be said for Nudism as a corrective influence against sex obsession or false modesty, it is certainly exemplified indoors. It has to be so. Sex-consciousness would admittedly be more embarrassing indoors if it existed at all, but the fact that hundreds of sane, normal individuals practise and enjoy this form of Nudism is in itself proof of its purifying influence. While I would not suggest that anyone should gain their initial experience under indoor conditions, I am convinced that such conditions do more to release any harmful repressions and inhibitions than those encountered outdoors. There is more intimacy and greater incentive to conversation and discussion. The conditions are more akin to ordinary home-life and, once realised, there is a simple ease or naturalness about them which is both soothing and refreshing to the spirit—providing, of

course, that the individual concerned is of simple and natural disposition. For those who wish to "show off" or assume an unjustified importance the conditions may prove a serious handicap. I wish to make no dogmatic assertions, but I do believe that the mixing of the sexes unclothed, indoors even more than outdoors, definitely destroys self-consciousness and artificiality in thought and expression. One gets to know the real person more quickly and more thoroughly. Ideals and aspirations seem to be crystallised and expressed more easily under these conditions and, generally speaking, thought is on a higher plane. In these days so few of us have opportunities of being our real selves. The rush and bluster and bluff of business-life tends to form a protective shell around our individualities. Otherwise, for some of us, life would become unbearable. The same conditions which make people rush to the "pictures," non-stop revues, cocktail parties and bridge-clubs, make those who have adopted Nudism as an alternative realise the superiority of the latter in respect both of health and spiritual well-being.

Amongst the many interesting and encouraging letters I received after the publica-

tion of *Naked and Unashamed* was one from a Major in East Africa, whose comments have a close bearing upon the psychological aspect of Nudism. It is too long a letter to quote in full, but the following paragraph expresses cogently the views of an intelligent and thoughtful observer. After referring to familiarity outbreeding curiosity (a happy paraphrase of "familiarity breeds contempt") he says:—

"I think personally that Nudist Colonies will for the future do the greatest amount of good to the rising generation, leaving out completely the beneficial action of sun and air on the bodies now practising Nudism. Actually the far-reaching results of this 'cult' will not be so much in the physical improvement of the race as the mental improvement in those of the future by having a sane outlook of what difference there is in sex. The present is, to my mind, an excuse of body-building, but the future holds more for those who are caught young, before they lose their 'innocence,' and will thus keep that innocence always as far as sex is concerned. The greatest possible benefit will be

achieved by producing normal generations to come when curiosity, 'school-knowledge' and whisperings will be things of the past and shame will be killed in its infancy."

That the exposure of the body to sun and air is highly beneficial, physically, can be understood by most reasonable people; but the psychological benefits accruing from the mixing of the sexes without clothes needs deeper thought and a more analytical mind. I entirely agree with my correspondent that the coming generations will derive the greatest good from the practice of Nudism and that the abolition of curiosity and false shame regarding the anatomical features of the opposite sex will come about naturally and inevitably in such environment. Here, again, the effects of indoor Nudism are just as valuable as those induced outdoors; especially if they are regarded as supplemental to the latter. I believe that any attempt to convince individuals holding aggressively antagonistic views is a mere waste of time and that the only satisfactory means of changing these views is personal, practical experience. Those broad-minded enough to realise the possibility of

their views being erroneous may be persuaded to make this test to satisfy themselves, and I have little doubt that it will result in self-conversion. Those who will not even admit such a possibility may well be left to their own convictions.

CHAPTER X.

HAS NUDISM A FUTURE?

A LOGICAL conclusion to this book would seem to be a chapter on "The Future of Nudism." Other writers have used this title, but I am not going to use it because I am not sure that Nudism *has* a future. All revolutionary movements depend, in the long run, upon public opinion, and this is a very difficult thing to estimate in advance. At one time many people thought the cinema was just a passing craze and that roller-skating rinks would rank permanently among our social amenities. Time has proved them to be wrong. I believe that the practice of Nudism, as described in the previous chapters of this book, is such a sane and practical contribution to human health and happiness that it should become general and permanent. It has been stigmatised by some critics as a form of decadence. "Back to Nature means back to savagery," and so on; but

this is a rather stupid and ill-informed view. True progress is not identified by the cheapness and popularity of motor cars, the speed and carrying capacity of aeroplanes or the mechanisation of industry. Owing to this form of progress, new laws have been found necessary to check the adulteration of foods and the decimation of the population by fast road traffic. There is no reason why we should not take advantage of scientific discoveries and inventions without relinquishing our rights to enjoy our lives in a simple and healthy manner. Nostrums and quack medicines are a poor compensation for the natural health which plain, wholesome foods, fresh air and exercise ensure. The types of men and women which are attracted by Nudism are by no means those of ignorant, unthinking savagery; they usually are quite the reverse and represent rather the intellectual type of progress which is prepared to revive truths and principles which have become forgotten or obscured in the rush and turmoil of modern times. It may be that the hectic conditions of to-day call for a drastic reconsideration of such principles and the establishment of salutary changes such as are offered by Nudist philosophy, although I should

hesitate to make such an assertion. Other critics have claimed that Nudism is "the fad of a moment" and point out that though the movement originated in Germany and grew with mushroom-like rapidity, it has since been repudiated in that country. This is quite untrue. As I have explained in an earlier chapter, the movement came into being under Socialist auspices and, in Germany, was tainted by a political bias which brought it under the ban of Mr. Hitler when he attained power. But it was not Nudism itself to which he objected and he made no attempt to interfere with purely private and non-political Nudist centres, which are as flourishing to-day as they were before the advent of the Nazi régime. Indeed, a friend of mine recently visited an important holiday centre of the Nazis at Herren Inseln on the Chriemsee, where the members not only bathed and sunbathed in the nude, but actually rowed out upon the lake in a state of complete nudity and showed no embarrassment whatever when alongside and overlooked by the various tourist steamers and similar craft. Then there is the "Purity Campaign" in the United States of America, which is claimed to be suppressing Nudism in that country. A few

rather ridiculous "raids" have been made in some States, but the status of Nudism has been very little affected by them and the movement has progressed, and is progressing, there more rapidly than in any other country at the present time. According to Ilsley Boone, Secretary of the American International Nudist Conference (an Association somewhat akin to our own National Sun and Air Association) and Managing Editor of *The Nudist* magazine, there are more than 300,000 Nudists and Nudist-minded individuals in America and it is estimated that within three years this number will be increased to a million. It is noticeable, too, that most of the books which have been written on Nudism have come from America and it would appear that Nudist literature has a greater circulation in that country than in any other. Perhaps we in England have not the same "flair" for publicity as our trans-Atlantic cousins, so that it is more difficult to judge the progress of Nudism here; but from the increase in openly advertised Nudist clubs, the spread in numbers and circulation of Nudist magazines, and the more general references to the subject in the Press, in broadcasts and in everyday conversation, it would seem that we are not far



behind other countries. Of course, we have jokes about Nudists and Nudism. We made fun of the idea that women should be allowed to ride bicycles, that "mixed bathing" should be tolerated and that women should have votes. Yet all these things have come about and come to stay. Personally, I think simple, clean jokes about Nudism are quite harmless and likely to help the movement forward rather than otherwise. Think of all the jokes made about the Ford car; the more ridicule it suffered, the more other manufacturers became inspired to imitate the methods of its inventor. I have mentioned "mixed bathing," and I can remember the time when this was regarded with less tolerance amongst the general public than Nudism is to-day. As a small boy I used to bathe with my brother and male friends and relatives at one end of the beach while my sisters bathed at the other end, a mile or so away. When it became possible (thanks to the broadening of public opinion) for us all to bathe together, I felt a thrill as of something very daring, although I was completely at a loss to account for it. Certainly we boys learnt very little more about the female form, for the cumbersome, baggy costumes worn by ladies in those days made

are quite a few doing this already and, from what I have heard, they are extraordinarily well patronised. I have several friends who have spent most enjoyable holidays at such places and receive first-hand evidence of their growing importance. I believe, too, that the medical profession will support the movement to an even greater extent than at present. Dr. L. J. Bendit, Assistant-Physician at the Institute of Medical Psychology in London, gave an address recently at the British Social Hygiene Council's summer school at Cambridge in which he said that if to-day social customs were such that men and women thought nothing of exposed nakedness, it would go some way towards solving sex problems and would diminish a certain amount of sex crime. In high civilisations, such as those of ancient Greece or Egypt, the body in its prime was not hidden from members of the opposite sex. Clothes were discarded with impunity whenever there was any logical reason for doing so, such as athletics or bathing. Therefore, it could not be said that with the increase of what old-fashioned people called immodesty our civilisation was decadent. On the contrary, it might be regarded as a sign of increasing healthy-mindedness. Since

the discovery of the value of sunlight the exposure of the body must be looked upon as a hygienic measure.

There are, undoubtedly, a great many well-known medical men who are adherents of Nudism who, for professional and material reasons, are reluctant to make their opinions public. I think this is a great pity even though, at present, it may be considered unavoidable. I am a very humble person, but when I have told friends that I am writing on Nudism, I have been asked: "But, of course, you do not write under your own name?" Obviously, if I believed that such writing was in any way shameful I should not pursue it; but since I believe wholeheartedly in what I write, I feel it would be cowardly and insincere to use a pseudonym. I have not the least objection to anyone knowing I am a Nudist and that I and my wife and family enjoy healthy exercise and interesting companionship at a Nudist camp every week-end. If I thought there was anything wrong in this I should not do it or permit my family to take part. And I think I can claim at least as much intelligence and understanding as any of my critics. I have often felt that the future of Nudism is very

much dependent upon its frank acknowledgment. I have known many cases in which adverse critics have agreed that it cannot be very wrong when they know that I, or other people of whose respectability they are completely satisfied, practise it. If only the public at large was openly informed that certain well-known people are enthusiastic adherents of the movement, I am sure popular opinion would be greatly influenced. Unfortunately, popular opinion is like that. The knowledge that certain high dignitaries of the established Church, to say nothing of large numbers of Nonconformist ministers, approve of and practise Nudism, would do more to convince the doubters than any reasoned argument. And I think this will come. The attitude of the Press and the public has changed a great deal even in the last twelve months, and this should encourage some of those in high places to make open confession of their faith. If instead of saying "a prominent clergyman" one could say "the Rev. Blank," or instead of Naval and Military officers one could say "Commander This" and "Colonel That," it would carry a great deal more weight. I think nearly all the larger clubs claim to include "members of the Church and legal

profession with representation of the Navy and Army." While those outside the movement do not disbelieve this, such a statement falls far short of the conviction given by actual names, especially if they be well-known. This, in my opinion, is one of the steps necessary in the advancement of the Nudist movement. The mere fact that many practise Nudism clandestinely gives colour to the fallacy that there is something "not quite nice" about it; notwithstanding the fact that the early Christians were forced to practise their religion in underground tombs and dared not openly admit their conversion to "the New Religion." Some of the religious opponents of Nudism might ponder over this. But, as I said at the beginning of this chapter, I am not sure that Nudism has a "future" in the wide sense of the word. In the early stages of a movement there are always enthusiasts, and even martyrs, who will make sacrifices for it; but to become general and popular it must be made easy. If the pioneers are successful in breaking down prejudices and providing satisfactory opportunities for the general public to participate, they will be generously supported. Upon them, however, the brunt of the battle must fall, and if they

relax their efforts and enthusiasm they will gradually fade into oblivion.

Nurse Cavell said: "Patriotism is not enough!" And it is not enough that Nudism should be carried on in isolated groups under the cloak of secrecy. I do not mean that Nudists should do anything rash or provocative. Stupid individuals who wish to show their courage and enthusiasm by challenging the law and exposing themselves in public are no friends of the movement. They merely lend colour to the criticisms levelled against it. Frankness and commonsense talks among friends will prove much more helpful. If you are a Nudist, do your best to make the people with whom you are in contact respect both your morals and your judgment and they will, in time, learn to respect Nudism through you. There is room for a great deal of improvement, too, in many existing clubs. It should not be necessary, as it is in some cases, for the potential Nudist to have to sacrifice comfort and everyday amenities just for the privilege of being able to doff his clothes. Those who conduct clubs should be more ambitious and not remain satisfied with a hole in a wood with a small hut for a dressing-room and a football or tenniquoit as

a source of entertainment. At present there are several clubs which offer little more, and it is a tribute to the merits of the movement and the keenness of its adherents that even under such conditions it can attract members of sincerity and high moral standing. When every club has a commodious pavilion, well-equipped huts for sleeping accommodation and at least a cold shower, the movement will gain in dignity and importance and, moreover, funds will be more easily come by to put such undertakings on a sound financial footing. The motor car would never have attained its present popularity if designers and manufacturers had been content with the early inefficient models.

Nudism is a principle which to be "understood of the multitude" must be presented in a concrete and attractive form. Publicity and propaganda in its behalf needs to be conducted with skill and restraint since for its adoption many ingrained prejudices must first be abolished. The practice of some clubs to refuse inspection of their premises by potential members until a subscription has been paid is, in my opinion, a great mistake. Let members bring their friends to see what enjoyable times they may have by joining

and judge for themselves the kind of people they will meet. The successful progress of clubs which grant such permission to properly accredited applicants is proof of the soundness of such a policy.

The future of Nudism, then, depends largely upon Nudists themselves. The leaders have it in their hands to build upon rock rather than sand, and if the existing fraternity and co-operation can be broadened Nudism can hope for a prosperous future. Once the general public learn of the improved health and mental outlook which come from Nudism it will become almost universal; but a few injudicious actions can easily destroy the fabric already built up. As a sincere well-wisher my advice to Nudists is to use their utmost endeavours to avoid antagonising non-Nudists, to prove by their own example that Nudism is a beneficial influence. The rest may be left to the commonsense and honesty of the great general public whose word must decide the question as to whether Nudism has a "future" or not.

APPENDIX.

DON'TS FOR NUDISTS.

DON'T try to "get brown quickly" by lying in the sun and "cooking." Be content to hasten slowly by letting your skin become pigmented by degrees before long exposures to direct sunlight. This will avoid painful blisters and unsightly peeling of the skin.

DON'T forget that air, wind and the light reflected from a bright blue sky will "tan" you without exposure to direct sunlight. It may be slow, but it will save beginners a lot of trouble.

DON'T wear darkened glasses unless you find it really necessary. Professor R. Campbell Macfie says:—"Exposure to sunlight in some cases causes sneezing, showing some reflex action through the eye on the respiratory centre, and it has been proved that light received through the eye increases the

elimination of carbon-dioxide and the intake of oxygen. It is difficult to believe that a receptor specially adapted to receive and transform light rays should not have a physiological as well as a psychological function."

DON'T forget that pigmentation ("getting brown") is Nature's way of filtering the ultra-violet rays which you wish your skin to absorb and that small doses at frequent intervals will afford greater benefit than protracted exposures. It is not necessary to induce erythema (reddening of the skin) at all to enjoy the good effects of the ultra-violet rays. The browner you get, the longer it will take for these life-giving rays to penetrate.

DON'T forget that while the complete exposure of the body may seem natural and proper to you, many people think otherwise and you have no right to offend or shock them by appearing in public or where strangers may see you in the nude. Moreover, this is against the law.

DON'T discuss Nudism before people of whose views on the subject you are ignorant. Instead of thinking you sensible and progressive they may regard you either as a crank or something worse. Keep your dis-

cussions for people of intelligence and sympathy or you will do the movement more harm than good.

DON'T try to proselytise. If you earn respect by your character and conversation, others may be led to follow your example; but any obvious attempt to convert is likely to antagonise.

DON'T be satisfied with just lolling about. Exercise, whether in the form of organised physical culture, games or routine camp work, is an essential to sane sun-bathing. Mere basking in the sun will not make or keep you fit.

DON'T take "snapshots" without definite permission of someone in authority, and don't broadcast them when printed. Few men or women would care for their portraits in the nude to be exhibited haphazard.

DON'T oil the skin generously while in the scorching sunlight. If you do, you run the risk of frizzling. Rub a little cocoanut oil into the skin and let it be absorbed *before* exposure. This will prevent the dryness and tightness sometimes experienced and reduce the risk of burning. There are many quite good branded "tanning oils," but most of

them cost a great deal more than their constituents justify. Those in the form of an emulsion are about fifty per cent. water. Coconut oil is cheap and effective. Olive oil is less suitable and more expensive. Mineral oils are quite valueless.

APPENDIX.

NATIONAL SUN & AIR ASSOCIATION.

ONE of the earliest Societies formed in this country for Nudist propaganda and mutual assistance was the N.S.A.A. The following are the expressed "aims and objects" of the Association, and a list of Nudist Clubs compiled by the Secretary will be found on the following pages.

The main objects of the Association are :

- (1) To encourage the practice of Sun- and Air-bathing and Gymnastics and Body-culture in the nude, as a means of mental and physical well-being.
- (2) To assist in the formation of Groups practising Sunbathing.
- (3) To maintain a register of such Groups and sympathisers in all parts of the British Isles.

- (4) To establish contact with similar organisations in other countries and to provide letters of introduction to foreign Sunbathing centres for APPROVED members.
- (5) To publish news of the Movement and proceedings of the Association from time to time.

The Association is of a non-political, non-sectarian and non-profit-making character, and membership is open to persons of both sexes. The minimum Annual Subscription is 5/- and the Association's year runs from 1st January to the 31st December. Membership automatically ceases if Annual Subscriptions are not paid by the 1st April. Every Member is supplied with the official Badge.

A Congress or Meeting of Members is held annually, usually at Whitsuntide.

The following list of Nudist Groups has been compiled from sources available to the N.S.A.A., but is not necessarily complete, as some Groups do not desire their addresses published:—

BALHAM GROUP.—Mr. G. Eves, 59a, Gosberton Road, Balham, S.W.12.

SUNHILL WOOD (*near Sidcup*).—Mr. W. Hardie, Sandiecroft, Upper Ruxley Farm, Sidcup, Kent.

DIOGENES SUNLIGHT CLUB (*near Watford*).—Mr. Hawkins, 93, Dryfield Road, Edgware, Middlesex.

BRITISH SUN-BATHING LEAGUE (*near Watford*).—Mrs. Drew, 95, Woodstock Avenue, N.W.11.

ESSEX SPARTA CLUB (*near Wickford*).—Mr. Bell, 53, Edison Avenue, Romford, Essex.

THE SUN-CAMPERS (*near Ewhurst*).—Mr. P. S. Keen, 49, Lambton Road, S.W.20.

THE LOTUS LEAGUE (*North Finchley*).—Mrs. Bedingfield, 92, Friern Park, N.12.

YEW TREE CAMP (*near Croydon*).—Mr. N. F. Barford, Sun Lodge, Upper Norwood, S.E.

THANET SUN-BATHING ASSOCIATION.—Mr. E. C. Cryer, St. Austell, Shakespeare Road, Birchington, Kent.

ISLE OF WIGHT.—Mr. A. L. Critchard, Woodside, Wootton, Isle of Wight.

TORBAY SUN & AIR CLUB, 8a, Torwood Street, Torquay, Devon.

THE NEW FOREST CLUB.—Secretary, Heather Edge, Ferndown, Dorset.

THE SOUTHERN SUN SOCIETY.—Mr. Hoad, 2, Crunden Road, Eastbourne.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON GROUP.—Mr. C. S. Tate, 141, Westminster Road, Handsworth, Birmingham.

WEST MIDLAND SUN & AIR ASSOCIATION.—Mr. J. H. Wheeler, 325, Goldthorn Road, Wolverhampton, Staffs.

THE NAKED TRUTH ABOUT NUDISM.

NORTH DURHAM CLUB.—52, Durham Road, Birtley,
Durham.

There is also a Group in HULL, but it is the rule to forward the address of our member to their Secretary when requested.

NOTE.—Fresh Groups are constantly being formed in various parts of the country, particulars of which will be forwarded to members of the N.S.A.A. periodically. For all further information write to the Secretary, National Sun and Air Association, 6, Foster Lane, Cheapside, London, E.C.2, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

THE GYMNIC ASSOCIATION OF GREAT BRITAIN.

This Association exists for the development of sane Nudism in Great Britain and has the following Groups affiliated to it:—

LONDON: The Sun-Folk Society.

MIDLANDS: The Midland F.B.C. Club.

LANCS.: The Lancashire Sun Society.

YORKS.: The East Riding Sun Society.

MONMOUTHSHIRE: The Western Sun Folk.

SOUTH AFRICA: The South African Gymnic Association.

All enquiries regarding these or other Groups should be addressed to the Secretary, The Gymnic Association of Great Britain, Newport House, Newport Street, London, W.C.2.