

GOING TO THE SEASIDE.



HERE is no doubt that, to a great number of people, half the pleasure of going away consists in talking about it beforehand. It is so very delightful when you are in the midst of work to feel that rest is coming, to know that you will soon be called on to decide what watering-place you shall visit—to hear

the *pros* and *cons.* regarding first one spot and then another—to listen to the experiences and recommendations of friends, each one contradicting what the other has said, and so being kept in a most charming state of uncertainty. And then at last, after making up your mind that Sweetrest is the very thing—that it is neither too far away nor too near, too expensive nor too crowded, neither too relaxing for George nor too bracing for Edith—to discover that there are two or three other places just as suitable, and that you must begin all your work over again.

It cannot be denied, either, that when the holiday is gained it oftener than not turns out a failure, especially in the case of those who have thoroughly earned the rest, who greatly need it, and who yet are to a great extent obliged to carry their work and their anxiety with them. This is because, whilst they are so happy as to have about them a number of little children, they do not possess at the same time such a superfluity of this world's goods as to enable them to procure necessary comforts without feeling a good deal of anxiety about the expense. People of this kind start off with their children to some place of which they know nothing, thinking that if only they can get away for a little while from the town, with its noise and bustle, they will be all right. Then in order to be economical they crowd themselves into close ill-ventilated apartments, and for the same reason live poorly and submit to various discomforts, and so at the end of two or three weeks return home with cheeks browned by the sun, it may be, and therefore looking better, but without having received any permanent benefit from the change; as they discover when, after a short return to the old routine, they are obliged to acknowledge that they are as nervous and weak as before they started.

It ought to be remembered that though fresh air and change of scene are most excellent, they are not everything, and that the good which they do may be entirely destroyed, if they are accompanied by poor living, bad drainage, ill-ventilated apartments, and worry. When a lady and gentleman go away without

"encumbrances," as the dear little ones are very unfairly called, they can go where they like, and do as they like, but when they have to take a number of children with them it is quite different. Then if the holiday is to be a success it must be gone about in a businesslike way, with the express object of getting out of it as much good as possible, both for parents and children.

In order to do this, it must first be decided how much money is to be spent on the occasion, and a good margin must be allowed for unforeseen expenses. It is so very annoying to find at the end of the holiday that more money has been spent than was intended, and so be under the necessity of economising half the winter, because of a little thoughtlessness during a month of the summer.

Then the next thing is to fix upon a suitable place. In doing this, I would advise that the spot chosen should not be at such a distance from home that it is necessary to take a very long journey in order to reach it; for if that is the case, the toil of getting the children there and back will be greater than the pleasure of the holiday—that it should not be too near, or the husband and father will be running up to business two or three days a week, and there will be very little rest for *him*—and that great care should be taken that there is no cause for anxiety about the drainage. Some watering-places are weak in this respect, and those who visit them gain anything but health during their stay.

As to long distances, there are many, I know, who think it worth their while to make an effort and try to see a different place every year. One friend of mine, who had a little family, used to go to the Land's End, which was about two hundred miles from her home, and she made a point of travelling in the night with the children, and so getting the greater part of the journey over whilst they were asleep. When talking to her about it, however, I could not help thinking that the game was not worth the candle. My husband and I were persuaded on one occasion to travel a long distance to a much-admired spot, and I never shall forget the discomfort we experienced. Part of the journey had to be made by water, and all the children were sick. We reached our destination two hours later than we expected—no lodgings were taken; it was raining, and I had to take care of the children whilst my husband set off in the darkness and the rain to look for apartments. We were so thoroughly miserable that we heartily wished ourselves safely at home, and determined that we would not attempt a journey of that sort again until the children were old enough to look after themselves.

It is much better to take lodgings beforehand, when such a thing is practicable, so that there may be a resting-place and a comfortable meal ready for the little ones after their journey. Even those who have not experienced it, can imagine how very unpleasant it must be to keep the children waiting at the

railway station, or at an hotel, whilst the elders of the party go to hunt for apartments. It is well worth while to send down a responsible person a day or two before to engage rooms; and it is oftener than not good economy to do this, because in the anxiety to get settled people are much more likely to dispense with certain comforts, or to pay for what they require at a higher rate than they would do if they had time to look about them.

It is very important to have clean, airy apartments, and plenty of room, no crowding. It is very bad policy to be doing all one can to get fresh air and health for twelve hours out of the twenty-four, and be undoing the good the other twelve. Hot, stuffy, and ill-ventilated rooms are no less bad at the seaside than they are anywhere else; and a stay of three weeks in comfortable, healthy lodgings, is more likely to be beneficial than a month spent in a close, crowded house.

In taking the apartments, it is always best to have a proper understanding about the terms. Rooms are generally let at so much a week, and "extras." These extras are an indefinite quantity. Sometimes they mean only boot-cleaning, often they include the use of the kitchen-fire at various prices, and the washing of the linen used by the lodgers. I have some friends who were once called upon to pay for the use of the furniture, the crockery, the cruet, and other articles which it was said were included in extras. Of course the charges made at lodging-houses are very often perfectly reasonable, but for all that it is right the lodger should know what and for what he is expected to pay.

If the rooms are taken by the week, and the visitor finds that he can stay two or three days longer than he at first intended, he should by no means leave these two or three days to be charged for at discretion, or he may find himself wofully taken in. It is much pleasanter for all parties to think about and arrange these things beforehand, rather than to have any unpleasantness when the time comes to leave. Nothing can be more annoying than to find, when you wish to make up accounts, that you have a bill sent in which very much exceeds the amount you expected.

Those who wish to gain health and strength from their holiday should make up their minds that they will live well during their absence from home. When I say live well, I do not mean that they should live luxuriously or extravagantly, but that they should have wholesome food, and plenty of it. The same remark may be made about this that was made about the rooms. It is better to stay three weeks at a place and do the thing sensibly, than to stay a month and save the money out of necessaries.

In making preparations for a visit to the seaside, it should never be forgotten that we have a very variable climate, and that therefore it is necessary to be prepared for cold and rain, as well as hot and dry weather. As the sea air ruins so many dress fabrics, it is much more economical, in choosing what dresses are to be taken, to give the preference to those which can be washed and got up again. When my boys

were small, I found it a good plan in the hot weather to make each of them four suits of blue ticking, trimmed with white cotton braid. The cost of these, made at home, was about two shillings and threepence a suit, and they could be worn for three seasons, being passed on from one child to another. The boys had a clean suit every other day, and at the end of the week my nurse washed them out. When we were at the seaside, she washed them in the bath in which the children were tubbed. They wanted nothing but washing and ironing: starching and boiling were not required. The children always looked fresh and clean in them, and they saved more expensive clothes.

It is best to take the first day or two of a holiday very quietly. The temptation is of course great to set to work and try to make oneself thoroughly acquainted with all the ins and outs of a place straight away. It will generally be found, however, that a sudden and complete change of air and scenery, and an alteration in the way of living, seem to be rather hurtful than otherwise for a short time, and that after the excitement of the arrival and getting settled is over, the visitor begins to feel languid and lazy. It is best to give way to this feeling. I have heard it said by those who professed to understand such matters, that this was a sign the change was going to be beneficial in the long run. Of course our energetic young friend, who is nothing if he is not muscular, will not care to keep quiet; but anyhow, until partially acclimatised to the place, he will find it better to be contented with strolling gently about, walking on the sands or cliff, and quietly absorbing as much ozone as possible. Then, as he begins to feel he is improving, he can take more and more exercise, explore the beauties of the neighbourhood, and make himself thoroughly familiar with all the nooks and corners of his retreat, and the manners and customs of its inhabitants. If, however, in the exuberance of his spirits he pursue a different course—resolve to "do" the place, and know as much about it as the oldest inhabitant in a few hours—to watch the sun rise from the topmost peak of the highest mountain in the neighbourhood the first morning after his arrival, with two or three other little exploits of the same description—he will in all probability spend a fair portion of his holiday in crawling about, with stiff joints and exhausted energies, over the few yards of sand, which can be most easily reached from his lodgings.

For the same reason I think it is better to wait a day or two before bathing. To those who are fond of the water this would be a great deprivation, but it is one which will, I am sure, be well repaid by the increased strength and the larger amount of enjoyment that will eventually be gained. Those who bathe in the sea ought never to omit to plunge the head under the waves and thoroughly wet the crown. The oil-skin caps which are sometimes worn by ladies to keep the hair dry are an abomination, and ought to be discarded. If the head is not wetted, a headache at the very least is almost sure to follow.

Whilst I am speaking on this subject, I must say a word on the unreasonable length of time some bathers

remain in the water. The first time of bathing a person should only be in the sea a few minutes, then come out, dress quickly, and take a brisk walk. Gradually a longer bathe may be indulged in. It must be evident to the most casual observer that it cannot be good, for those who only occasionally enjoy the luxury of a sea-bath, to remain in it half or three-quarters of an hour, and come out chilled and tired. The worst of this sort of thing is that the individual is led to fancy that bathing does not agree with him (or her, for young ladies are much to be blamed on this account), and so gives it up altogether, when if he or she had been content to enjoy it in moderation they might have been ever so much better for it.

Many parents have an idea that paddling in the sea is so good for strengthening children's ankles. No doubt it is when gone about sensibly. But how can any good be expected to follow when children remain two or three hours with their feet in the water, then put on damp stockings over their half-dried feet and legs, and perhaps wear the clothes that have been splashed with the waves all the rest of the day? Paddling ought never to be allowed excepting when the sun is shining and the sand is warm; the children ought not to do it for an unreasonable length of time, and the mother or nurse should be on the sands with them to keep the shoes and boots dry, and see that the little feet are well rubbed with a dry towel. When these precautions are

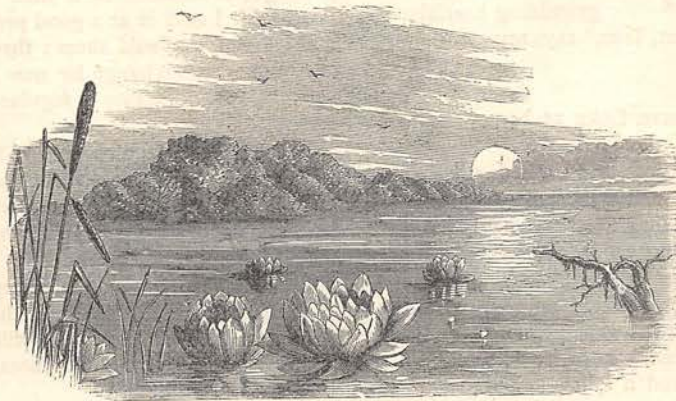
taken, paddling will not only do no harm, but very likely do good. A clever physician told me that when he resided, as he did for many years, in one of our fashionable watering-places, a large part of his practice was devoted to children who had brought on diseases of the limbs with injudicious paddling.

Of the thousand and one ways of "improving the occasion" of a visit to the seaside I have said nothing, neither have I anything to say, as such matter must be left to the individual taste of the visitor. In the interest of my young friends I will, however, venture to protest against the practice of turning the annual trip into a prolonged cram, and thus making that which should be enjoyed as an entire relaxation from all work, especially that of the brain, a mere outdoor school, in which anemones and rocks have been substituted for books and desks.

It will be evident that the suggestions I have offered are intended mainly for those who find it desirable to combine economy with pleasure. To those to whom money is no object my remarks may seem to savour more of parsimony than prudence. Still I may remind even these fortunate persons that a larger amount of comfort and pleasure is often to be secured by the exercise of a little forethought and common sense about small matters than by a lavish expenditure, which, however little felt, is seldom productive of a satisfactory result.

PHILLIS BROWNE.

FIELDS OF GOLD.



LOOK not by cities, look with me
For the field of the cloth of gold;
You will find it where the breezes free
Swing odours manifold.

You may call it gorse, or whin, or furze,
But the vale is warm and glorious;
Where its wealth is spread, there soft air stirs
The bannered green victorious.

Bright sunshine on the flashing spears
That guard those blossoms golden,
And clarion-throated trumpeters
Of lineage Eden-olden.

Then on this field of gold throw down
What you would leave behind;
Heaven's steeds shall tread dark fancies down—
Mild south and warm west wind.

The blue Camowen's winding stream
Shall be our trench and moat;
The pennoned trees that wave and gleam,
Our banners as they float.

And when the round moon hangs her lamp
Within the soft-hued sky,
Think who keeps watch above the camp
That guardeth hopes so high. A. FAUSSETT.