

the letter as I went along, until all semblance of my individuality was corrected out of it. I acquainted Jack formally with the fact that I was engaged to Rolfe, and hoped he would not disapprove of it; told him that Mrs. Pelham had died happily, knowing we were united, which had been the object of her dearest hopes for years; and that, in obedience to her wish, we intended, with his consent, to marry as soon as possible and go out to Australia, giving the reasons for this latter arrangement.

"You really will agree to the wedding taking place soon?" said Rolfe, for the moment almost forgetting his grief.

"Yes," I replied desperately. "Let's get away to Australia, the sooner the better."

Such an answer must have sounded queer to the poor boy, viewed in the light of his former experience; but he only kissed me rapturously, without the least suspicion of my motives for making it.

I had an answer from Jack by the return of post—a such a dreadful little note, so short, so cold, so unlike him. He was beyond measure surprised, he said, but

he should never think of interfering with my choice. He hoped I should be happy, and he should be glad to facilitate my arrangements for a speedy marriage. I was to express his regrets to Mr. Pelham that he found himself unable to come to the funeral, and to ask him to be kind enough to send me to Mrs. Carter's at No. — Pembroke Villas, Bayswater, as soon as it was over. If I would write her word when to expect me, she would meet me herself at Shoreditch. And that was all.

The day soon came when I tied my crape bonnet and veil over my pale face and shining yellow hair, and left Ely College for ever. Rolfe was in despair at my departure, but of course had to acquiesce in the propriety of Jack's arrangements; and he comforted himself with promising to write to me every day, and with the prospect of our marriage before the year was out. Mr. Pelham accompanied me himself to London, partly because I was now, as he called it, a member of his family, and partly because he wished to arrange matters with my guardian on his son's behalf.

END OF CHAPTER THE SIXTEENTH.

"YOUR BANK HOLIDAY."



PECULATE on them as we may, anticipate them in imagination as we will, our holidays often take us wonderfully by surprise. Especially is this the case with those who work hard. Every day brings its work; the holiday when first thought of seems afar

off, and plans for its enjoyment are postponed till they seem a little more seasonable. There is plenty of time. And the result (as often happens when action is deferred because there is plenty of time) is a scramble. Slowly Time creeps on, and when he brings the holiday he finds us, perhaps, quite unprepared for it. We have not been thinking of it lately. Something was said about going to such-and-such a place, but we have not decided. So the holiday morning dawns on a world of half-formed purposes. Then the different schemes come crowding in the mind together. We are afraid to select one at the sacrifice of the others; the day is passing away so quickly as to add to our perturbation and confusion, and our holiday

may thus end in being frittered away, only half being done in it that might have been done, and that half hurriedly and badly, with a consequent loss of enjoyment. And this is a sad loss. Our holidays come so seldom that a lost or imperfectly used one is a catastrophe. Let us see if we cannot insure for our future ones fair treatment, and by a little intelligent forethought extract as much as possible out of them.

First let us follow the excellent plan of ascertaining what to avoid—what not to do.

There are two great causes of failure in holiday enjoyment: leaving everything to the last and trusting almost to inspiration of the moment, and trying to do too much—and doing it. The victims of both delusions are legion. The first may be found wandering listlessly in the streets at midday, haunting the taverns, dining in such restaurants as are open, and perhaps crowning the misfortunes of the day by going to a theatre in the evening—a painful waste of a holiday. For the chief use of a holiday is change—change of air, scenery, thought—change of life, in fact, for a little while. What is the value and enjoyment on a Bank Holiday of the most *recherché* dinner in a London restaurant, compared with the toothsome sandwich (although it is a little crushed in the pocket) or the succulent apple when partaken of on a breezy Kentish hill-side, or the modest cut from the joint which a rustic hostelry affords—ay, or even bread-and-cheese alone, which has been earned by an eight or ten mile walk through copse and lane?

The next class of blunderers must also be tolerably familiar to most readers. Here they come rushing down the street to the railway station—father, mother, and children—with pieces of bread-and-butter in their mouths, and their shoe-laces undone. They are going down to Southend perhaps now, back again in the

course of the day, so as to get an hour or two at the Palace, and then a rush to some West-end theatre, and home finally to a remote suburb, which they are fortunate if they reach before one in the morning. Do we not recollect meeting them in the late trains, overcome with fatigue and excitement? Father and mother weary and quarrelsome, children dropping asleep like broken candles, and the whole party looking as if the day had been one of additionally hard work instead of recreation?

It seems an astonishing thing that there should be so many people found in the streets of our great cities on public holidays. London seems as much a sight for

And skirted thick with intertexture firm
Of thorny boughs, the rural walk
O'er hills, thro' valleys, and by river's brink."

Ah! let places of entertainment display their attractions as they will, let excursion trains run to the most charming of seaside resorts, the man in possession of a good pair of legs has an advantage over them all. What a "day in the country" is his! With what a feeling of pleasurable expectancy he rises in the morning early, and after a complete ablution and a comfortable breakfast, takes the train some fifteen or twenty miles out, and walking-stick in hand commences his peregrinations! The more enjoyable is it



A HOLIDAY ON THE RIVER.

Londoners as for country people, since a day's release from work brings them swarming out into their streets, gazing about them as if wondering what manner of city they live in. Of course numbers of the gaily-dressed crowds are only passing from one part to another, from terminus to terminus; but all the great features of London architecture have crowds and crowds of admirers. It would seem to show how closely the toiling thousands must apply themselves to their work, that the best use they can make of a holiday is as it were to raise their eyes from their labour and survey their workshop. We should be glad indeed if we could suggest some better and healthier mode of holiday-spending.

And first of all is to be recommended, and especially to those whose occupations keep them indoors during the day time, a good ramble in the country—

"——— the rural walk through lanes
On grassy swarth close cropped by nibbling sheep,

if he does not know the country in which he finds himself; food for observation lies at every turn; he wanders down lanes and over stiles and footpaths, wherever his fancy and inclination lead him. And when a stiff hill presents itself, and with the consciousness of health and strength he bends himself to the task of its ascent, we think when he reaches the summit he surely reaches the summit of peaceful enjoyment also. How fresh the wind blows, how invigorating the pure air seems, how beautiful the landscape lies spread before the view, and how the enjoyment of all these things is heightened by the sense of having fairly earned them! And what an appetite is picked up for the disposal of the dinner found in some wayside inn, or possibly the more ambitious hotel of some flourishing country town into which the wanderer's footsteps have led him! After dinner and a judicious rest the walk may be resumed, and if it is a fine dry day the delights of a repose on the turf may be indulged in;

and then as the evening draws near, the now tolerably weary wayfarer makes his way towards some town possessing a railway station, and is soon speeding away through the darkening meadows home. Peaceful and dreamless shall his sleep be that night, and happy his awakening in the morning; and his good health and spirits during the next two or three days shall testify to his well-used Bank Holiday. And enjoyable as all these things are, they are materially heightened by pleasant companionship. Take great care, however, that you select a suitable fellow-voyager, one whose tastes and inclinations are somewhat like your own. Bitter sorrow will overtake you if by promises and cajolements you lure some sluggard to accompany you on a twenty-mile walk. As soon as he begins to get tired, which will happen very soon, he will lose all heart and spirit, his walk will become an irksome task, and he is hardly human if he does not visit the consequences of his discomposure on you. He will tell you he cannot understand what a man wants wandering about a desolate country *with no object*. And on this same string he will harp constantly. "If we only had some object in view," he will say, "I should enjoy this very much" (he would give anything to be at home), "but what I object to is this aimless wandering." And then he will reproach you bitterly with having persuaded him to come, all the while that you are reproaching yourself for a precisely similar reason. The walk will thus be entirely spoilt, the closing evening will only increase your mutual despondency, and you will be as thoroughly out of joint with the surrounding circumstances as was the indolent dandy who rose at half-past four to see the

sun rise, and said "it was a most disgusting sight." So be careful that your companion of the road is stout of limb and heart, can turn the incidents of the journey to account, and knows what is really the character of a country walk.

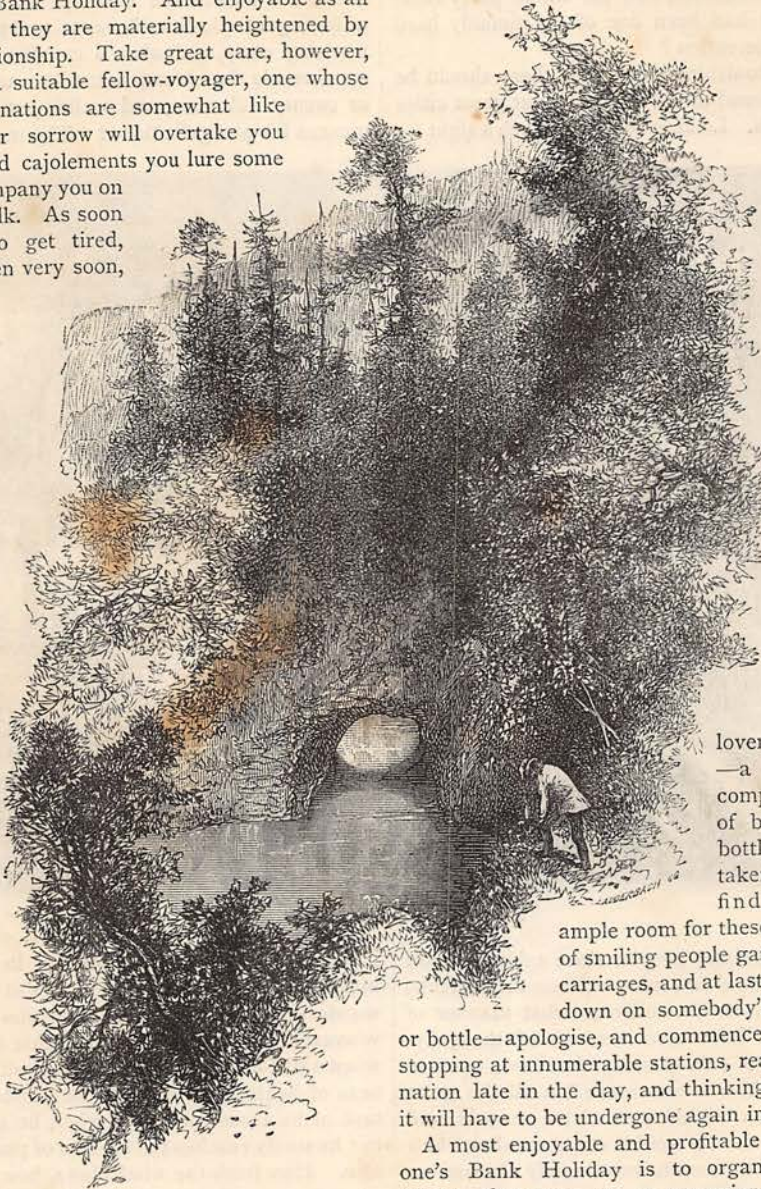
In these times of quick trains an enjoyable holiday is to be got by running down to some seaside or inland village, and spending a day or two in traversing the neighbourhood. Make up your mind thoroughly beforehand. Have everything packed and ready, and escape from your city as early as you can in the evening. We would counsel the avoidance of excursion trains by all means. There are those, undoubtedly, to whom excursion trains are a day's delight. The

lovers of a good crush—a crowded railway compartment—a flask of brandy, or a large bottle of porter, partaken of *en voyage*, find in excursions

ample room for these delights. Rows of smiling people gaze at you from the carriages, and at last you get in and sit down on somebody's basket, or baby,

or bottle—apologise, and commence a weary journey, stopping at innumerable stations, reaching your destination late in the day, and thinking with regret that it will have to be undergone again in the evening.

A most enjoyable and profitable way of spending one's Bank Holiday is to organise beforehand a trip on the water, or an excursion to some spot of historical, geological, architectural, or some special interest in the neighbourhood. It has been seen often before perhaps, but try now not only to see it, but to understand it as well. Two or even three families could unite to make the visit, and amongst the members secure some one who knows sufficient about the object of the visit to explain it to the others. An astounding and novel interest can be lent to an old castle or a strange formation of hills and rocks, if we



A BOTANISING EXPEDITION.

know the historical associations of one, and the geological aspects of the other—and know them really, not merely so as to be able to say, "Very old castle that. Do you see the date on the door, 1646? Some, where about the time of Charles I., wasn't it? Wonder if he ever lived there?" Or, "Look at those rocks! Are they not beautiful? How awful it would be if one were to fall on the top of you!" &c. &c. Most cities and towns have some lions of the kind suggested near them, and the necessity for their being very remarkable and extraordinary varies with the wisdom of the informant of the party, for a really learned man could make a blade of grass entertain a large party. But if it is impossible to procure such an addition to the jaunt as a guide, philosopher, and friend, and if no one will take the trouble to read up the subject well

before starting, the next best thing is to take with you a tale or poem, of which the plot, descriptions, time, place, or associations harmonise with the scene of the visit. It is not difficult to find some one kind enough to read it aloud, and then you will feel what an additional charm a tale of feudal times has when read beneath the battlements of some castle where its episodes might have occurred, or how well nature in mountain and forest can "illustrate" poems and tales of imagination. Without allowing the affair to swell to the dimensions of a picnic,

some refreshments had better be taken, as fresh air is a great provocative of appetite, and if the brain is exercised by any disquisitions on history, architecture, &c., you will be still more hungry. So take some sandwiches and other refreshment, and you will enjoy your dinner at five or six o'clock all the more if you know the day has not been allowed to pass without your having learned something.

But ours is a variable climate. We retire to rest on calm still nights, when all is bright and clear, and we find it pouring with rain in the morning, sometimes. Suppose the Bank Holiday turns out wet? Was not the very first Bank Holiday in August a regular soaking day? Such things have happened, and may do again, and the best thing to do on a wet holiday is to throw melancholy to the winds and have a hobby-day.

We most of us have a hobby, or ought to have. Seize the opportunity, then, of your Bank Holiday to commence your picture—your ticklish bit of sculpture or carving which you have determined in your secret mind shall be a masterpiece. You have all day, and all the day-light too, and when weeks or months hence your work is finished, the day on which you began it will always be surrounded in your mind with pleasant reminiscences. Or if you have never trod these paths before, begin now, and you cannot make a worthier use of the day. Fellow-workers help one another, provided they all mean business; so if you can find two or three of your friends to come and work with you, so much the better. We make arrangements for spending the day out of doors; why not agree, if the day turn out wet, which is as likely as

not, to spend it together in-doors?

It is however, of course, difficult to plan holidays for all, when so many have special claims upon their time. Some are fortunate enough to have friends near town whom they can visit, some have large families and "belongings" which greatly increase the difficulties of travelling. And some slaves to business declare that they always go to work on Bank Holidays, because it is the only day they can be free from interruption. Such incorrigibles we must leave to their own sweet will, but we hope the



"IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO FIND SOME ONE TO READ ALOUD."

wavering—the uncertain—those whose holidays are sometimes almost a burden to them for the want of something to do, may find our hints useful. Nine persons out of ten you may ask do not know what to do when a holiday comes.

Another man will wander disconsolately about the streets all day, under the impression that he is enjoying himself. We have known a man to be met at three o'clock in the afternoon on a Bank Holiday in St. Paul's Churchyard, and the poor fellow asked the way to the British Museum. Let those who are inclined to leave the arrangements for spending their day of relaxation to the day itself, instead of looking forward, take warning by this, and recollect that a holiday not enjoyed is an opportunity sadly wasted.

A. H.

