

## HOW TO ENJOY THE SEASIDE.

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At present notices "To Let" are suspended in many a seaside parlour window round Great Britain, while landladies peep slyly behind their lace curtains (like the spider behind its network) at every stranger who appears in front. Ere long, hot days will bring them flies in shoals. Paterfamilias, with a very red face and piles of luggage—to say nothing of three perishable bonnet-boxes—will be seen at every important station escorting wife and daughters to the sea. How often, poor man, before the stipulated month has expired, will he wish himself back at the office or the familiar round of daily work in town! The monotony of enforced leisure soon becomes oppressive, and even with frequent naps in the easy-chair the mornings are apt to be very long. Having ourselves suffered from seaside dulness, let us hasten to offer a few suggestions by which to put to flight *ennui*.

Young people of both sexes can hardly find the seaside pall upon them, so long as they can boat and ride and walk in each other's company. To those, however, who have passed the age of thirty, two views of holiday-making present themselves. One consists, metaphorically speaking, in lying on the beach and throwing stones idly into the waves. This is intolerable to all persons with active minds, though it certainly carries out the popular view of a holiday as being a time of thorough idleness. The other imperatively demands mental occupation of some kind, and insists that faculties of mind and body entirely disused in ordinary life should be called into play. Those who are thus actuated must be energising, in short, as the great

Greek philosopher would say. Charles Kingsley was a good type of minds of this class. A holiday meant for him excessive bodily exercise in walking and trout-fishing, with much study and contemplation of some of the many fields of natural science which country or seaside displays to the visitor, especially as regarded his favourite study—entomology. We own to a certain sympathy with those who love a holiday of perfect idleness. Some men are born with an intense capacity for doing nothing and rejoicing in it, and it is well after ten or eleven months of labour that they should be able to grasp their idea of happiness. For ourselves, however—and we would fain hope for most of our readers—this enforced idleness would be intolerable. Some activity must be practised even in the Long Vacation, some bodily or mental recreation pursued, in order to keep the faculties from rusting, and then we return home refreshed, with energies braced up for many months of busy work.

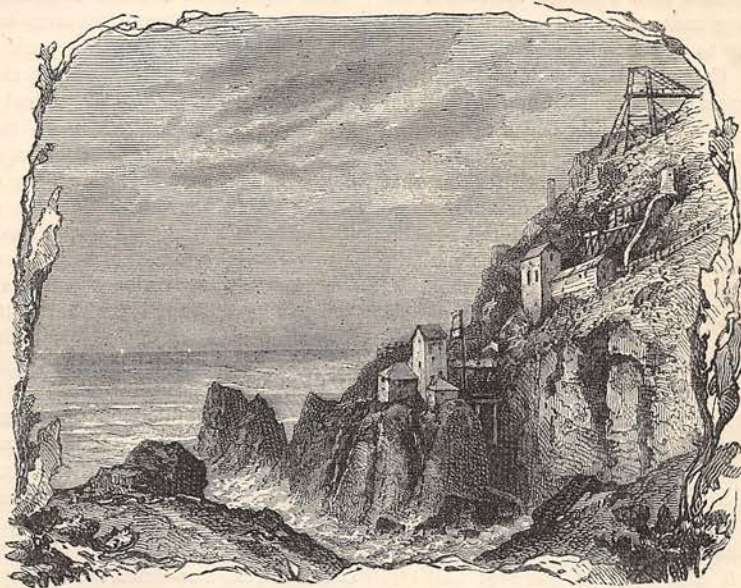
Omitting different kinds of mental improvement while at the seaside—for every reader will, of course, take some books down with him on the special subjects with which he is, or wishes to be, conversant—we will mention several modes of pleasurable activity by which the sameness of a seaside trip may be diversified. First, has the visitor ever learnt to swim? If not, let him be assured that the adage, "It is never too late to learn," applies pre-eminently to this delightful exercise. Without descending to particulars (which may be learnt from any cheap treatise), it will be needful to



remark that the ability to swim depends in man, as in every animal, on the specific gravity of the body being less than that of the water, and the difficulty of it proceeds from the necessity of the limbs in man being

used in a different manner in swimming than in any other kind of locomotion familiar to him, whereas in other animals (such as the horse, birds, dogs, &c.) immersion in the water merely places them in their usual position, and swimming calls into play the same motions which their ordinary modes of progression demand. Besides this, the specific gravity of nearly all mammiferous quadrupeds is less than that of water, which is at once a considerable help to them in swimming as it were by instinct. Man, for the most part, must learn to swim; and here is the receipt. It must be understood that we are teaching a man come to years of discretion. First, work up theoretically and practically (as far as may be out of the water) the position of the body in swimming, and the rhythmical extension and adduction of the legs and arms. Then boldly walk into the sea, when it is rather calm, up to

as a necessary part of the *poojah* due to a watering-place, as an Anglo-Indian would say, the daily bathe is eagerly welcomed, and the whole system invigorated and braced up by it. For the swimmer leaves the water with every muscle and limb aching with his exertions, and the whole body pervaded by a healthy glow, of which he will feel the beneficial effects throughout the day. When once the stroke is familiar to a man—comes, as it were, by instinct to him (as it surely will if the above *modus discendi* be persevered in), all that is needful is to set one's self daily the task of a stroke or two more, and soon the learner will find himself able to swim any reasonable distance, not now near the side, but boldly dashing out among the waves. Thus, if he finds he can only struggle on for six strokes to-day before his face sinks and he gets a ducking, to-morrow let him set himself the duty of struggling on



the chin, turn to the shore, and fall forward on the chest, letting the arms cut the water before the body, and practise the motions now familiar to the mind from the treatise. Never mind swallowing a little water! Persevere in this for several days in succession, and then, if possible, get a swimmer to support your chest for a minute or two. Or, better still, as man is nearly of the same specific gravity as water, the addition of a very few pounds of cork will make him float. Get several pieces of cork, therefore, and fasten them to loops in which the arms can be inserted, and with the addition of these you will find, when the "stroke" is once familiar, that you will easily float, and what is more, make progression through the water. Stick to this plan for a few more days, and then try your own unaided powers again, and you will be astonished to find that you can swim. In this way, without any swimming-master or parade of any kind, swimming (we speak from personal experience) is easily learnt, and then what a treat, and what a charming mode of gaining exercise, does a bathe in the sea become! Instead of being a shivering duty, looked forward to

through seven strokes, eight strokes next day, and so on, never being satisfied with his efforts until he has succeeded in performing his daily number of strokes. In this way a visit to the sea becomes a happiness to be looked back upon ever after in a man's life with pleasure. How much better is it thus to have acquired the mastery over a strange element than to have lounged up and down the beach for many mornings, listening to Italian organ-grinders and smoking innumerable cigars!

Another seaside activity, which will commend itself to many, on account of their having dabbled in it as boys, is fishing. Of this there are two branches: one, fresh-water fishing, which may often be enjoyed at out-of-the-way seaside places, on the moors at the back, or in the upper waters of the little river which may fall into the harbour. Needless to say, permission to angle in these waters must always be secured. The second branch is, however, free to all, is more fitly connected with a seaside visit, and possesses numberless pleasures which can only be found out by actual experience. The delights and

capabilities of sea-fishing are only just beginning to be discovered, but its pursuit will, at all events, lessen that lamentable ignorance respecting our sea-fish and the modes in which they are caught, which may be noticed at every dinner-table, and which is most discreditable to Englishmen, of all people. Engage a boatman to take you out for an evening's fishing, and enjoy all the pleasures of anticipation in pulling up first one and then another unknown fish from the bottom, with now, it may be, a crab hanging to the line, now a specimen of that curious coral, the "dead man's fingers;" mark the sun flinging its crimson rays far and wide over the sea, as it sinks behind the cliffs; and then revel, if you have an artist's eye, in the tender grey and blue shades of twilight, as they imperceptibly deepen on the plunging waves into a nocturne more impressive than the most accomplished painter can grasp—and then consider whether it has not been an evening more pleasantly spent than had you been listening to a second-rate concert at the assembly-rooms. Catching bass with rod and fly is said to be as exciting as salmon-fishing. At all our southern and western harbours this fish is to be taken in abundance through the summer. If a man has a mind to gather information and statistics on that great harvest of the sea, our deep-sea fishings, where can he better set about the task than at the seaside, among the men and boats employed on this national industry? Once let him get over prejudices about the smell of dead fish, the tossing of the sea, tar, bilgewater, and the like, and an endless fund of entertainment and research is opened to him in expeditions further afloat than the evening's fishing off the beach. A sail at early morn, before the sun has risen, to catch mackerel, by whipping for them in the offing; a night out on the waters with the herring-nets, while the fish gleam in the meshes like silver in the moonlight; an expedition into the bay on board a trawler, to take flat-fish—these trips are not readily forgotten afterwards in the rush and whirl of business and city life.

Supposing, however, that the visitor to the seaside has an invincible horror of tossing on the waves: he must be oddly constituted, if a man of any mental power, who cannot find many opportunities in the neighbourhood of the sea for exercising his favourite hobby. Is he an archæologist? There is almost certain to be an abbey or two, and probably half a dozen castles, within easy reach, to say nothing of primitive earthworks, early British hut-circles, and the like. Is he fond of geology? The cliffs are sure to exhibit fine sections of strata; fossils, perhaps, can be extracted from them with a little trouble, and by passing under the face of the rock-walls or cliffs in a boat, many homely geological problems and much useful practice may be obtained. Off the coast of Norfolk, and near Brighton, elephants' bones and teeth have been dredged; while among the bones of the saurians in the Wealden sands and clays of the Isle of Wight, the palæontologist will find much to delight him. At Lyme Regis, near Hastings, and on the Yorkshire

coast, more remains of the huge pre-historic lizards may be discovered. Again, the ornithologist will find entirely new classes of birds among the sea-fowl and the cliff-haunting hawks and buzzards. On the Cornish coast, if fortunate, he may obtain a peep at the chough, one of our rarer birds, into which, as the legends of the county tell, King Arthur's soul has passed. The bushes, gorse, bents, &c., on the seashore and cliffs will afford a rich harvest to the entomologist. Every department, in short, of British natural history may be studied with advantage by an inland observer carrying his own tastes with him to the sea.

Most interesting, perhaps, of all the seaside pursuits is to set up a small aquarium (or two or three, if necessary), and, filling them with salt water, procure specimens to stock them by sweeping the rock-pools with a small muslin net. Readers of Edward the Banff naturalist's life will remember what rare, and in some cases unique, treasures he obtained by the simple expedient of himself searching, and setting his daughters to search for him, the refuse of the fishermen's nets, the specimens attached to their lines, and even the contents of larger fishes' stomachs. It was a favourite occupation of Canon Kingsley, in his seaside holidays, to investigate the lower animal life of the shores which he visited. To this custom that fascinating book, "Glaucus," owes its existence. Any one who follows his example will be surprised to find at the seaside what worlds of curious life lie within his ken and yet without it; within it, if he diligently sets himself in the spirit of that fascinating tale, "Eyes and No Eyes," to discover it; without it, if he unsuspectingly and carelessly passes it by. Many departments of the lower forms of animal life (until, indeed, it merges in the vegetative life of the corallines and zoophytes) may be best studied on the shore. And admirable natural history manuals of all these departments, so far as they are exhibited in our English seas, are published to guide explorers in their researches. The crustacea, the star-fishes, the zoophytes, the molluscous animals of our seashores and tideways, have all been described by competent authors; but the families are so numerous and the localities so vast, that diligence may very easily immortalise itself by new discoveries. As to the gain in mental discipline, the increase of knowledge, the renewed zest with which on another occasion the annual seaside visit will be looked forward to with eagerness by those who take up the study of these lower organisms in earnest, rather than as at present dreaded for its dullness and unprofitableness, we do not care to speak. The limpet clinging to its little point of rock is no inert type of the mind which rests contented in apathetic ignorance of the seaweeds, fish, molluscs, and zoophytes around it during a seaside holiday. It has been our aim to suggest a few lines of bodily activity, thought, and study, to counteract this evil habit. Let a man actively enter upon one or other of these retired walks of knowledge, and he will soon find how pleasurable such investigations are, how engrossing is the interest with which they will speedily be regarded.

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