

THE ANNUAL HOLIDAY: HOW TO BENEFIT BY IT.

BY A FAMILY DOCTOR.



HANKS to cheap railway fares and fast steam-boats, the annual holiday is now-a-days within the reach of most people who care to study economy. The opportunity of obtaining change of residence and change of scene for a few weeks, or even days, in summer or autumn, ought to be looked upon as a blessing, and we certainly should endeavour to make the best of it. It is not invalids alone, nor even the delicate, who are benefited by an occasional change, but every one who takes a fair share in the bustle and stir of this work-a-day world.

Well, then, without further preface, I would observe that whoever wishes to thoroughly enjoy his autumnal trip or holiday, and gain health therefrom, will do well first and foremost to consider where and how he should spend it. Probably it would be as well to consult his own physician, to tell the doctor exactly how he feels, and get his advice as to whether a relaxing, bracing, or sedative climate is most suitable for his special case; whether there should be during the holidays as much moving about as possible and as much change of scene, or whether it would be better to seek out some quiet healthy watering-place, and there, far from the bustle and stir of life, far from business care and worry, enjoy in peace the *dolce far niente*. But the selection of a suitable locality is of the very greatest importance. Suppose, for instance, the reader has been for many months harassed in business and worried with work and care, till his constitution is greatly enfeebled, his spirits lowered, and his nervous system weakened, it would be a very grave mistake indeed to go to a relaxing place like Torquay, the atmosphere of which contains much moisture, and where the temperature is high in the summer and autumn months. But such an individual would find at Folkestone or Ramsgate just the place to suit him. He might for the first two or three days find much benefit, and much soothing of the nervous system, from a course of sea-weed baths; then he could cautiously begin to bathe in the sea, being careful not to stop in too long, and to regulate the time to the state of his stomach. There are dozens of such places both inland and by the sea, in Scotland, in England, and Ireland.

One object of the invalid—for such it is best for the reader to consider himself—ought to be to reach his destination with as little trouble and fatigue as possible. He ought not to lumber himself with too much luggage; he ought to pack at least a week before starting, making sure he forgets no necessary, and he should never trust to getting articles he wants at the place he is going to. To be sure, he

may procure them, probably by paying two prices, but at the very moment he may want to use some little luxury, say toilet vinegar for example, he will find it most inconvenient to have to send out for it. Many parcels and packages are to be avoided. One large chest and a tiny hand-bag should contain all that is wanted. Flannels are never to be forgotten, for even in places where the sun is warmest during the day, it will usually be found that the mornings and evenings are chilly, damp, and dangerous. People who are reckless and careless as to their clothing seldom escape learning one good though somewhat severe lesson, which generally serves them for the rest of their lives.

Medicines must find a place in the baggage-chest; but first just one word about the baggage-chest itself. I have known many a holiday spoiled by careless packing. Your box ought to be the strongest *wooden* one you can find or buy, and well bound; the articles should be stowed in it with reference to the time they are likely to be needed, and their place in the chest ought to be written down in your notebook. Your dressing-case, writing-case, and tiny medicine-chest should each be placed in a handy and most secure position; and on no account should bottles, containing anything whatsoever, be placed unprotected in the body of the box. The dressing-case should be a handy strong one, and contain all toilet fixings you are in the habit of using, whether necessities or luxuries; among the latter I might mention a few bottles of the best eau-de-Cologne and a pair of metallic hair-brushes; a little of the former poured on the head, and the use of the latter to the temples, will often suffice to remove a headache caused by over-fatigue or walking in the sun. The writing-case should contain pens, inks, writing-paper and blotting-paper, envelopes, stamps, post-cards and newspaper wrappers, and if you sketch, your drawing utensils. By the way, there is nothing more healthful than to dream away a few hours sketching while seated on a shaded rock by the quiet summer's sea. A well-stored writing-case will save you no end of trouble.

Take any medicine which your doctor may think suitable to your case, but do not forget that in autumn, especially by the sea-side, one is liable to several ailments, which, taken in time, are easily remediable. One or two of them it is my duty to specially mention, and the intending tourist will do well to be forearmed, and take in his chest the medicines I recommend for their cure.

Feverishness (febricula) may be caused in many ways, but means ought to be taken for its subjection. The symptoms are unhappily too well known to need description; the sense of uneasiness, the nervousness, excitability, the feeling of pain and soreness ascribed to the bones, and the high temperature are familiar to us all. Good will generally be done by sponging the

body with cold water and toilet vinegar. Perfect quiet and rest should be obtained; the room in which the patient lies should be partially darkened only if the light annoys him, but very well ventilated. Cold acidulated drinks should be taken, and a dose of Rochelle salts, or of the waters of Pullna or Honyadi. Oranges may be partaken of if found agreeable, and the food be given on the plan of little and often, but at the same time it should be palatable, easy of digestion, and nutritious. This treatment will usually remove simple fever in a day or two, and if it does not the services of a medical man are to be procured, and his advice followed, not only as regards physic, but food and drink.

A bottle of sal volatile is useful in many ways—for faintness, acidity of the secretions, common colds, &c.; it should therefore always find a place, well secured in a stoppered bottle, in the medicine-chest. Care ought to be taken during an autumn holiday not to expose any portion of the body to draughts when heated and fatigued. If cold is thus caught, an extra or a warmer flannel should be worn, the feet and legs should be bathed well at night in hot water and mustard, and a sleeping draught should be taken—not a narcotic from the chemist, but simply a bottle of lemonade with a little good whiskey in it. Put an extra blanket on the bed, take an aperient pill, and next day guard the system from exposure.

Some people are troubled during the autumn holiday, especially if the weather be very warm, with what is known as prickly heat; the skin of the arms or chest becomes covered with reddish points, tingling and burning. A little cooling medicine should be taken, simpler diet, less exercise, and lighter under-clothing. Quinine pills are a good tonic, and the good effects of this medicine are increased by the morning sponge-bath, only the skin should be dried without much rubbing, and with a soft towel.

We all know how disagreeable a thing chafing of the skin is, and simple though the ailment be, it can yet to a great extent mar the enjoyment of our autumnal holiday. It is best prevented by great cleanliness and the use of Castile soap for the bath, with little friction, moderate exercise, and the avoidance of rough under-clothing next to the skin; some light astringent ointment, such as the benzoated oxide of zinc, should be used, or the chafed surface should be dusted with a mixture of zinc and chalk, procurable at any respectable chemist's shop.

When going on a holiday do not forget to take three or four nice bath towels with you, and also a good large bath sponge with an india-rubber-lined bag to contain it. Let your chest also contain plenty of light warm socks—silk or Shetland wool—light shoes, strong walking-shoes, and slippers, a soft hat, and a straw hat, if you care to wear such; at all events, pay particular attention to the comfort of head and feet. You will not forget umbrella and waterproof, the latter only to be worn in a shower, and I may here say

a word in favour of paper collars and fronts. They are not only handy, but the paper front is the best chest-protector possible, and I do not hesitate to say that the wearing of them when travelling would oftentimes ward off attacks of chest disease, and probably save valuable lives.

I leave it to the reader himself, or to his physician, to choose his place of abode during the autumn holiday, but I sincerely advise him to avoid all kinds of hurry and excitement, whether in travelling or doing anything else, to avoid the use of stimulants, to beware of cold, wet, draughts, or too much sunshine. Rise betimes, always at the same hour, and begin the day with the cold or tepid salt-water bath, obtaining free action of the skin by the evening soft water and soap warm bath once in three days.

Fruit in the morning is invaluable, and the best kind is good oranges, eaten before breakfast. Prunes after dinner have also a laxative and cooling tendency. Now, as the great object of the autumn holiday is to quiet the nervous system, and re-invigorate the system for the winter campaign at desk or counter, we should carefully attend to what and how we eat. A short stay at any healthy watering-place will soon tend to increase the appetite, and we should take advantage of this to live well for the time being—avoiding, however, meats and vegetables that are difficult to digest. Coffee is better for breakfast than tea; fish, too, should always be eaten with this meal, with a little steak or chop, and a boiled egg, with a fair allowance of good bread and butter, and it is an excellent plan to finish up with a tumbler-full of cool rich milk. This, even in the most bracing climate, should sustain one till about 1.30 p.m., the best hour for luncheon. If faint between meals, a little lemonade and a dry biscuit should be taken, but beer greatly disturbs the process of digestion, and spirits are apt to unnecessarily augment the flow of the gastric juice, and in delicate constitutions to cause acidity of the stomach with flatulence. The luncheon should be fairly substantial, and soup therewith does good. If a feeling of weariness follows this meal, one ought to lie down for an hour; but whether or not, no exercise should be taken after lunch, for some time, at least. Dinner may be taken at 6 o'clock. It should never be hurried. Cheerful company at dinner is a great aid to digestion. While at the sea-side one may partake with benefit of several dishes, including soup and white fish, and concluding with light puddings and fruit. The best vegetables are potatoes, greens, peas (if they agree), turnips, spinach, and raw tomatoes. The last is a most invaluable blood-purifier.

There are many ways of spending the autumnal holiday, but few, in my opinion, more invigorating both for body and mind than a tricycle tour through England, or on the leveller roads of Scotland or Ireland. It is best to go with a companion, and to jot down every day the incidents of the journey, and a description of the scenery. You will thus be gently exercising the brain as well as the heart and muscles.