

blacken and destroy the vegetation. These localities are so sheltered from north and east winds, and equable in temperature, that they are likely to attract a still larger proportion of delicate persons than the number who, I understand, have already given up their winter sojourns in the south of France for so genial a place in their own land. Persons suffering in the throat and lungs are recommended to add the Mumbles and its neighbouring bays to the list of their winter's quarters; and when I quote from Dr. John Bevan's statement (Medical Officer of Health for Oystermouth), that "the average death rate during the last nine years has been 12.4 per thousand," I think I may be justified in suggesting this place as one very worthy of the name of a winter health resort. There are good hotels and boarding-houses of a character to suit all classes, besides lodgings; competition has not as yet raised the prices of living and accommodation beyond very reasonable limits.

One more holiday resort, suitable for winter, may be named in this necessarily short paper, and that is the sheltered little town of Budleigh Salterton. I do not name it for its special attractions outside its mild prettiness and good open sea; but it is essential that I should provide a retreat for some who need a specially quiet, retired spot, where they can enjoy shelter from the east wind, a gravel soil, good water, and good sanitary arrangements. There is an hotel and boarding-house, and a fair number of lodgings; and to those who prefer to escape from the noise of excursionists, brass bands, and barrel organs, for the purpose of study or undisturbed rest, this may prove exactly what they seek. When I was there, two or three years ago, my chief diversion consisted in tramping up and down the pebbly beach in search of moss-agates, chalcedony, and red jasper, some specimens of which I obtained. But the beach is still more remarkable, as being for the most part composed of flat-round stones, known as the "Salterton pebbles," which are of sandstone, most curiously variegated in coloured designs. A pleasant drive may be made to Sidmouth, the British camps at East Ottery Hill and Sedbury Hill, Court Hall and its "haunted chamber" (for the "haunting" I do not give my authority), over the moor to Woodbury Castle and Colyton Raleigh, and by omnibus, running three times daily, to Exmouth. The climate is credited with being specially suitable for persons suffering from chest diseases, and from debility after fever. From Waterloo to Exmouth (to which a ticket should be taken) is a distance of 182 miles—15s. 2d. third class, and return ticket for one month, £2 1s. 6d. second.

Before the next Christmas vacation brings with it the usual enquiries for genial retreats, I hope to give you a few more suggestions, in addition to the three or four now offered.

It would be no novelty to speak about Bournemouth as a winter resort, nor could I suggest it as likely to afford inexpensive accommodation; but I think that an adjacent watering-place, possessing similar recommendations as to climate, sheltered site, and gravel soil, is comparatively little known. I refer to Southbourne-on-Sea, having a full southern exposure, situated to the eastward of that town, at three miles' distance. Very many of our girls complain of *anæmia*; and as this pretty little place can boast of a valuable chalybeate spa, situated towards the end of the West Parade, I can confidently advise sufferers in this respect to take a fortnight or three weeks' holiday in this place. I have obtained a strong recommendation to it from one of our leading London physicians apart from the question of the spa; and as to these waters, you may accept the opinion of Dr. Herman Weber, the great mineral-water authority, with regard to their nature and use. But if you take advantage of them, I advise you to see a local doctor first. The analysis was made by C. T. Kingsett, and the ingredients they contain consist of sixty-six grains of ferric sulphate and fifty-seven grains of sulphate of sodium per imperial gallon. There is a fine undercliff esplanade at Southbourne, sheltered from the north wind, a pier, and an omnibus service, which conveys you to and from Bournemouth for a shilling return fare. It has also the rare attraction of a winter garden under glass, removed to this place from Tedworth Park—a celebrated one—having thirty plant-houses and ferneries adjoining. There is also river boating—at only sixpence an hour—on the Stour; and by means of this easy conveyance you can visit a lovely spot called "The Sheep Wash." There is also a pleasant walk of a mile and a half to Christchurch; and as it dries up so quickly here after rain, owing to the soil being of sand and gravel, walks may be contemplated in a winter sojourn as well as in the summer.

To select a pleasant and interesting place for a winter holiday—mind and body are equally in need of consideration—demands not a little reflection, leafless trees and the absence of flowers being a drawback in most of our watering-places, and sea-bathing and lawn-tennis then out of season. But I might still add several other names to my brief list, and amongst them very particularly that of the old historical town of Lyme Regis. It lies between Beer Head and Portland, in the

centre of a natural bay, at the south western extremity of Dorsetshire, and at a distance of 144½ miles from London. The line of railway is by Great Western *viâ* Bridport, or by the London and South Western *viâ* Axminster; and the fare for a month 35s. second class return, or 12s. 0½d. third single. Lyme Regis has a sheltered terraced walk above the sandy beach, screened on one side by the famous "Cob," a peculiar kind of pier, which protects the harbour. The sands are firm and hard, and by them you may go on foot to Charmouth; and inland there are walks in all directions. Provisions are reasonable in price, and I believe I may say lodgings likewise. "But," my readers may enquire, "what are the special features and attractions of this place, that suggest its suitability as a place of winter recreation?" I for my part see much—as a lover of natural antiquities in the form of fossils—which is within the attainment of any visitor, and free of cost, rendering this a place of unflinching interest, and affording an agreeable pursuit day by day, while enjoying to the full a close proximity to the sea. The blue lias cliffs that line the shore are full of pre-historic remains, and even without the use of hammer and chisel beautiful specimens of crystallised and of metallic *ammonites* may be found lying among the rocks, washed at high tide by the sea. It was here that the celebrated Miss Duning discovered large specimens of the *Ichthyosaurus* and other anti-deluvian reptiles, which she presented to the British Museum—a self-instructed natural genius like Mr. Beard, of the famous "Banwell Caves," near Weston-super-Mare. In my early youthful days I had the pleasure of seeing and conversing with both these interesting persons on the particular scenes of their wonderful discoveries. A word of warning must now be given in reference to the quest of fossils in the blue lias cliffs, and that is, that the smallest shower of crumbling slate-like stones therefrom should be taken as a warning to run from them at that instant towards the sea. The alarm may usually be of no real benefit, but the fall on other occasions may be considerable; so never make light of it, for it might prove to be quite as serious to the explorer beneath the shower as the proverbial "rain of cats and dogs." I think my list of winter holiday resorts has been sufficiently diversified in character to suit very many demands and individual tastes. So I take my leave of the subject, with my best wishes to all for a healthful and interesting ten-pound holiday, in whichever direction their choice may lead them.

## OUR CHRISTMAS SCHOOL TREAT.



Christmas ship. Our stock exhausted; nothing was left us.

It haunted us for weeks.

We had had in former years every sort and kind of entertainment—Christmas-trees, bran pies, fishing ponds, Mrs. Jarley's wax-works, Father Christmas, Santa Claus, magic-lanterns, *tableaux vivants*, a

There are three of us, Maud, Alice, and I; but we had not an idea between us, and father would not help us; he always leaves these entertainments to us to get up; and the worst of it was, he was so dreadfully hopeful, he said he was sure we should hit upon something.

Then there was Mr. Balfour, the curate; but he was no use at all; he has only one idea in his head just now, and that is Maud; and Maud has no idea this year except Mr. Balfour; and Alice and I agreed the only things we could hit upon were those two, and that we could have done with a will had we been allowed. Last year Maud was sane, and she had a lovely idea for the treat, viz., "The old woman who lived in a shoe;" she was the old woman, and very pretty she looked, with powdered hair, wielding a birch rod, with the prettiest of fierce frowns on her

face. The shoe was a wonderful creation of wood and cardboard, but I hope I shall never have to make another for my sins as long as I live; it was such a trouble.

The school children—at least twenty of them—were dressed in night-gowns, and grouped round about and in the shoe, each with a basin of broth by its side.

The worst of it was, it was a great deal of trouble, and it did not last very long.

A week before the treat Alice and I grew desperate; we racked our brains in vain; we positively could not think of anything to amuse the children—"the wretched children" we called them in our despair. Our minds were a blank.

At last I was seized with an idea.

I threw up my hands—I jumped for joy.

"Alice," I said, "I have it at last. We will have a gigantic Noah's ark. I'll design

it, Mr. Balfour shall make it, you shall paint it; we will ransack London for penny animals. I know you can get beauties at the Lowther Arcade in two-shilling bundles. We will number them, and the children shall draw for them; it is newer than a bran-pie."

"Yes, dear, so it is; the only thing is, it is not original; it has been done before," said Alice in a tone which chilled my enthusiasm.

"Not original? Been done before? Oh, Alice, I give it up! There is no new thing under the sun. Solomon was right. We can't have a treat this year; let us go and tell father so. I am sick of it," said I in despair, to find my idea had actually been forestalled, and was not a new one at all.

"Wait a moment, Nell. Suppose we make the biggest Noah's ark that ever was made except the real ark; let us make the children the animals—we can cut out masks for them in cardboard; then we will make each child act the animal it represents, and on the night we will have a procession from the ark all round the platform," said Alice, rising to the occasion.

"Alice, you are a genius. It is perfect. My dear, you have saved my mind from collapsing entirely. What a load you have taken from my mind. Another sleepless night would have finished me. It is a splendid idea. We will do it!" I exclaimed.

And so we did. We began there and then. We seized father's new *Times*, which he had not looked at; I took one sheet and cut out a giraffe's head and neck; Alice took the other and folded and cut it into a donkey's head. The latter was so good, that Tom, our only brother, pretended it was a new photograph of his youngest sister, and said the likeness was striking. That evening was spent in cutting out paper patterns of every animal we could get any resemblance to from our own memory or from pictures. The next day we ransacked the house for cardboard, and cut out our designs in that from the flat patterns; we joined the two sides—in some cases three pieces were necessary—together, stiffening the

long-necked ones with cane or whalebone, and then we painted the heads and faces with some common paints.

The effect in many instances was capital; there was no mistake about the giraffe, the cock, the goose, the donkey, the elephant, the wolf, the stag, the fox, or the ox.

The kangaroo was less easily recognised, and required a pouch to mark its identity; but the camel was another success.

Tom of course pretended he did not know the camel from the hen; so, lest there should be anyone else as stupid as Tom in the room, we decided to cut out wings in stiff brown paper for all the birds, and paint them also.

That evening we had our first rehearsal. We chose the children, and assigned an animal or a bird to each; then we made them practise the noises appropriate to the parts given them, into which they entered with great zeal.

The ark itself we left to Mr. Balfour and Maud to make, only telling them it must be ready for the last dress rehearsal the day before the treat.

We were so interested in our work that all our leisure moments were occupied in making the animal masks, and we forgot all about the ark till we were assembled in the schoolroom for the last rehearsal.

"Where is the ark?" was the first question that greeted us on arriving from a chorus of children.

"Mr. Balfour, where is the ark?" said I.

"Maud, where is the ark?" said Alice.

The couple looked at each other in horror, and then blushing confessed—

"We forgot all about it."

"Forgot the ark? What have you been doing all the week then idle in the schoolroom?" said I indignantly.

They thought it better not to attempt to answer this question, I suppose, for they were silent.

"Never mind them, Nell—they are no use; the question is, how are we to make an ark by to-morrow?" said Alice.

Necessity is the mother of invention, says the proverb, and for that occasion we made a table and some trestles on the top, with some curtains thrown over them for the roof, do duty for an ark, the children entering by a door which was behind the table, and filing out in procession by one end, which was left open.

This ark, however, did not satisfy us; but the next morning an inspiration seized Alice, and ordering the linen-horse to be carried to the school-room, she dragged me there, laden with coloured paper, paste, and cardboard. We called for a carpenter on our way.

Arrived at the schoolroom, we had the linen-horse placed lengthwise on the floor; then we raised one side, so as to form a sloping roof, above the door by which the children were to enter, and this we made the carpenter fix firmly to the wall.

Then we had him nail a thin strip of wood to form the eaves all round the two ends and the front of the ark; we then roofed it with pasteboard, and made one end and the front of the ark of the same; the other end was left open for the children to go out by. Then we covered it all with coloured paper, on which we painted windows, and the result was most satisfactory as far as it went; the worst of it was, it only went as far as a cottage—it was not an ark; it certainly would have sunk had it been placed in the position of the original ark. What was to be done?

The boat was beyond us, I thought, in despair; when suddenly I thought of something, and seizing a pot of paint and a brush, I proceeded to paint a black boat at the bottom of the red ark. Alice meanwhile cut out a prow in cardboard, which we fixed to one end, colouring it black; another piece of cardboard made the stern, and then our ark was finished.

Now at last we had the ark and the animals, there remained Noah and his wife to be represented; these parts Alice and I undertook, dressing ourselves, at a great sacrifice of personal vanity, in costumes as closely like the wooden figures in toy arks as we could devise.



## A NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

By HELEN MARION BURNSIDE.

"Heavy harvests nod beneath the snow."—Pope.

Under the snow  
Lie little seeds sleeping,  
In mother Earth's keeping,  
Waiting to grow.

Under the mould  
The lilies' and roses'  
Sweet life yet reposes,  
Safe from the cold.

Under the bark  
The new sap is springing,  
Fresh burgeoning bringing  
Out of the dark.

While 'neath the snow  
All new life expanding,  
Is silently standing,  
Waiting to grow,

God grant you, I pray,  
In all that's before you,  
Grace to ensure you  
Strength for the day.

Under the ling  
The skylark is waking,  
New roundelays making  
To carol to Spring.

Till the sun's rays  
Its impulse shall quicken,  
And white Winter, stricken,  
Shall languish away.

O'er heath and hill  
The sad wind is sighing;  
The Old Year is dying,  
In peace and good-will.

Deep in the heart  
New hopes are unfolding  
Like flower-buds, holding  
Their petals apart.

God speed you, O friend;  
Fair angels defend you,  
And all good attend you  
As onward you wend.

O'er moor and mead  
The New Year is springing,  
And, dawning, is bringing  
My kindly "God speed."