

"Down by the Sea."

AN ACCOUNT OF THE SEA-SIDE HOLIDAY HOMES OF THE
POOR CHILDREN'S SOCIETY.



*By Our Own Special Charity
Commissioner.*

Photo by Geo. Newnes, Ltd.

WHO is not making holiday? Our happy children burst in brimming over with glad excitement, to announce the fact that they are free from the little worries and cares of school for five or six weeks, and we take that as the signal for a general exodus. Spades and buckets are turned out of the

they look out of the windows, may be excused if they imagine that all the world is on holiday and that, if the children they see do not happen to be going to the seaside to-day, they will probably be going to-morrow.

But it might also happen that narrow streets and lanes would be traversed, and then the fortunate children of the well-to-do, full of holiday anticipations, might, for once in their bright lives, realise in some degree their happy lot.

The Board School has certainly closed its doors for a summer month, and thousands of children, who attend those fine institutions, will taste the joys of seaside and country-side. But thousands more there are, who live every day below the margin of common comfort, whose holiday must be spent within the precincts

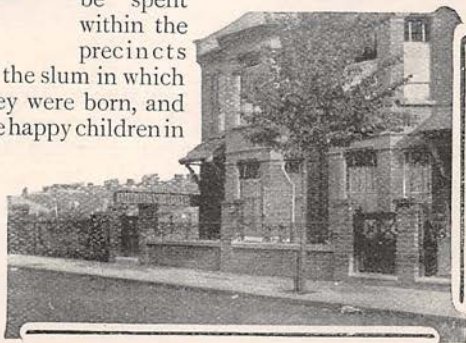
of the slum in which they were born, and the happy children in



CHILDREN WHO NEVER HAVE A REAL HOLIDAY.

lumber room; tennis rackets find a place with the golf sticks; bicycles are piled on the top of the four-wheeler, to be the subject of anxious solicitude to the cabman, who likes not these articles, all the way to the station; and away the whole family goes to the seaside!

It may be that the cab, or family coach as the case may be, in its passage from house to railway station, has occasion only to traverse fine West-end thoroughfares or leafy suburban roads, and the happy children, as



ONE OF THE HOLIDAY HOMES AT SOUTHEND.



AT LOW TIDE ON THE BEACH AT SOUTHEND

the cab will catch a glimpse of these little ones making mud pies for lack of sand; playing cricket with an old ball and a stick; dancing to the popular airs of a piano organ, or deep in the mysteries and intricacies of hop-scotch.

Yes, after all, there are inherent compensations in childhood, be its lot cast in palace or in slum. The difference between old folks and young ones is that the former need

well, or a cripple whole, or transport the drooping flower of childhood from the thin, hard, unkindly soil of the slums to God's garden in the country; or from the close, heated atmosphere of the one-room tenement to the place where the winds blow in from the sea, and the smell of salt and boats and tar makes life a wonderful romance.

Talking of one-room tenements, it may be a surprise to many people to learn that in

London alone, according to the last census returns, there are one hundred and forty-nine thousand, five hundred and twenty-four such dwelling places! You who live in spacious mansions; you who house your dogs and horses royally; you, too, who dwell in beautiful country houses, with the thrush on the lawn, the black-bird in the coppice and the peach and nectarine upon the wall: you



CATCHING A CRAB.

amusing but the latter can amuse themselves. The grown-ups may think the theatre or the concert or the elaborate game necessary to their recreation, but the little child can make a baby out of a bundle of rags; a priceless jewel out of a piece of glass; and can keep shop with bits of chopped brick or the refuse of Covent Garden market, with more enjoyment, if with less profit, than their elders could with all the aids of civilisation.

But the happy art of make-believe will not do everything. It won't make a sick child

highly respectable suburban residents who live in pretty cottages and charming villas, think of it! One little, cramped, close room to live and die in! Fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers eat, sleep, cook—when there is anything they can exercise their talent upon—and “do the washing,” all in one narrow room! You would not think existence possible, but it has to be possible, and therein lies its horror.

“Why doesn't some one do something?” you exclaim. Ay, but the some one who has



THE CHILDREN ENJOY THEMSELVES BEST.

to do something is always some one else, and because we cannot pull down the slums with our own hands, and build every family a tidy little cottage where they can live under conditions that are at least human, we are apt to think we can do nothing. Can nothing be done, then? Perhaps nothing adequate can be done, just at this moment, to cure the rooted ills under which the poor of our large cities groan, and which are too deep-seated to be cured by First Aid Treatment; but there is a way to alleviate, at least, this very moment, the terrible stress under which these people, and especially the little ones, live their lives. Scores and hundreds of them can be taken from their single close room; from their narrow, ill-smelling alley; from their mean street, where the long, stifling day is only succeeded by the tossing, sleepless misery of the night, and transported to the

seaside; and not for a day only, but for a week or a fortnight, and in some cases, where the recipient of the bounty is crippled or an invalid, for one glorious month!



SAND AND SHELLS AT SOUTHBEND.

The Poor Children's Society, which has its headquarters at Shaftesbury Hall, Trinity Street, Borough, S.E., has been the good fairy whose wand has transformed the lives of thousands of children, who, but for its aid, would have had no more chance of getting to the seaside than of visiting the South Pole. Some of these poor children may have seen the country—the green fields, the trees, the hedgerows—but there are thousands of them who have never seen the sea, never let the golden sand trickle through their fingers nor felt the lap of the wavelets on their bare feet.

Look at them in our pictures—the boys on the boat, the other little



WHERE WORK IS PLAY.

a day's outing to the seaside also, and thus help to brighten their lives, for the visitors too often hear from their lips sad stories of their narrow lot.

Will not some who read this appeal deny themselves of a little luxury, that not only

true, that many who return are the bread-winners, but there are others, just as brave and self-denying, who return to luxurious homes and to everything that makes life pleasant. To such, and to their glad friends, The Poor Children's Society appeals.



READING A LETTER FROM HOME.

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The Holiday Homes are fitted out with beds and cots for the children as depicted in the photograph on the previous page. A cot or bed can be named after the donor or subscriber of five guineas. This sum may be personally subscribed or it may be collected and the cot named after a friend.

There are some cots named in memory of some of our soldiers who fell in South Africa during the war, and now that peace has really come and so many people are looking for the early return of their loved ones, mercifully spared to them through all the perils of this long and trying campaign, would it not be a beautiful thank-offering to name a cot, not after a fallen hero, but after one who has returned to home and country? It is, alas! only too

But let it not be thought that Tommy Atkins forgets the poor little mites; if you had read, as I have, scores of letters from the Front enclosing regimental collections, your already high opinion of the British soldiers would get a lift, for, in despite of hard times, Mr. Breton has received scores of pounds from South Africa mainly from private soldiers who could ill spare it.

After all, my readers are the arbiters in these matters. The Poor Children's Society is helpless unless those whom the good Lord has blessed with a superfluity of this world's goods will spare a little for this Christ-like work. Of one thing we are assured, that not only will the gift bless the recipient but it will doubly bless the giver. It will bring joy into poor, sordid lives—perhaps a transient, but a very real joy—but the giver shall certainly not lack of God's great and exceeding reward.



TEA IN THE OPEN AIR.



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WHERE WORK IS PLAY.



THE PLAYGROUND ATTACHED TO THE HOLIDAY HOMES AT

fellows paddling in the water; the poor little lassies enjoying themselves to the top of their bent—this joy has all come to them without money and without price, as far as they are concerned, because some compassionate souls have denied themselves one of their countless pleasures or luxuries, that some of Christ's little ones might have a week at the seaside.

The Holiday Homes belonging to the Poor Children's Society are at Southend—a seaside resort easily accessible from

the hot-beds of hooliganism, crime, and depravity? Alas, it is too true. The pity of it is that these tender plants have again to be plucked up, just as they are beginning to take to the kindly soil, and taken back once more to their sordid surroundings. But their week in the country will ever remain a delightful memory—a fond recollection—an unforgettable joy.

"But," says one, "the children in the photographs look quite well dressed and respectable."

Ah! Thereby hangs a tale. This tidy jacket, this pretty frock, is only "on loan." The children's own poor raiment, after being cleansed and disinfected, is put away to be returned to them when they go home. Think of the double transformation! New clothes and a new location for one week! It is sad, but it is something, and even this brief respite is surely worth purchasing



MAKING DAISY-CHAINS. A NOVEL OCCUPATION.

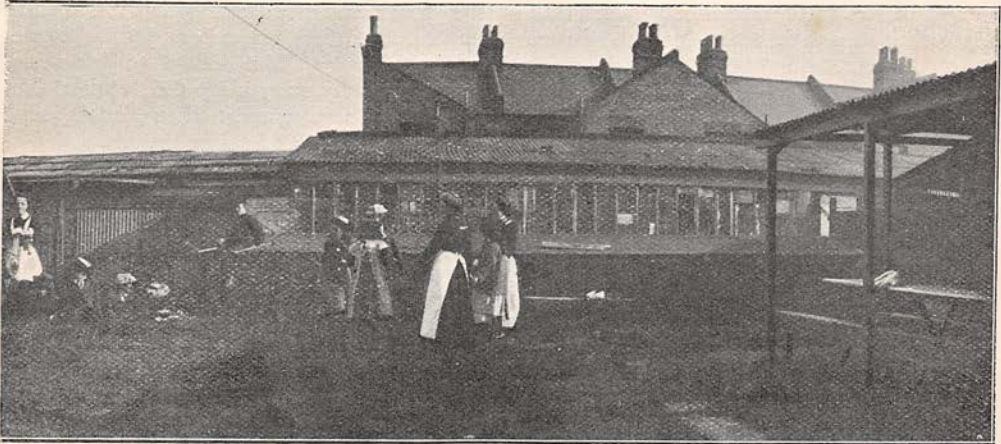
London, where the children can not only run down to the sandy shore, and enjoy the immemorial pleasures of digging, paddling, and bathing, but also get a sight of the green fields where the daisies grow.

Look again at the pictures and you will see them in the meadows. Surely they must imagine they have got into another and better world. Can it be that in the same planet there are such diverse conditions of life—that within thirty miles of where these children play so innocently and happily lie

for the Master's sake.

Mr. Breton, to whom, with his wife, this work owes everything, is always glad to receive gifts of clothing for this very purpose, and then, when the winter comes, it is distributed to the poor children who flock to Shaftesbury Hall in the short, dark days for the meal which is never denied to the birds of the air but often enough to the "children of earth."

It would be too long a task to recapitulate all the countless activities of this helpful



SOUTHEND—HAPPY TIMES INDEED!

Mission, but a brief summary may serve to bring to the minds of the charitably inclined the fact that a little gift, put into the right quarter and well used, goes a long way and accomplishes much.

Last season five hundred children had a free week's holiday at the seaside homes, as depicted in our photographs. Eight hundred children and adults spent a whole day at the seaside and were provided gratis with dinner and tea. Forty thousand poor children, orphans and cripples, were provided with either breakfast, dinner or tea. Four hundred and fifty orphan children were treated to a Christmas-tree gathering, and each child received a new garment, toys and sweets. Two thousand were also entertained on Christmas and New Year's days to a dinner consisting of roast beef and plum pudding ;

one thousand five hundred to a bun and cocoa breakfast on Good Friday. There are also out-door services and evening



A PICNIC UNDER THE TREES.

classes, gospel meetings and many other forms of helpful evangelical work.

But not only are the little pent-up children set free for a time from their sordid cage, but the poor, care-worn, overburdened mothers, often widows who day after day toil for a mere pittance, are also given a holiday. When they gather at the open-air meetings in the slums, often the workers see the worried expression vanish from their faces as they hear news of something brighter, better and happier than their present life ; but does it not seem a mere mockery, after all, to point them to God's promises in His Word of a haven of joy above, and then refrain from giving them a little joy on earth below?

It is Mr. Breton's earnest desire to send more of the mothers for



ONE OF THE DORMITORIES. THE NAME OF THE COT IS INSCRIBED OVER EACH, AND REPRESENTS A GIFT OF FIVE GUINEAS ONLY!

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