

Social Topics.

The Season.—Social life involves social duties which all are bound to recognize to the best of their ability, and to which it is worth while for each one to give some serious consideration. How we can best fulfill these duties, and add our quota to the general sum of happiness, is not an unimportant question; and it is this we should set ourselves to answer in our social endeavors, and not how we may impress persons, for whom we do not care, with our importance, or relieve ourselves most easily from social obligation.

The grand party which has formerly imposed upon almost every one who kept house, at least once during the season, is now so generally understood as a sort of gathering up of fragments, that an invitation to one is hardly considered a compliment; and, in fact, they are only resorted to by persons who have a large list of acquaintances to propitiate—and even these call it a "reception," and not a party.

The truth is, society has become so unwieldy in the large cities, and so expensive a luxury, that it has been found necessary to place it within certain limits. Instead of giving a party, intelligent women now give a series of receptions, which are announced for certain evenings, and to which certain sets of people are invited.

Instead, also, of being interrupted in their daily avocations by callers, they set apart one day in the week upon which to be at home; and this day, be it Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or any other, is printed in the lower left-hand corner of their visiting-cards, so that their friends all know upon which day they are sure of being found at home.

These are simple methods of keeping up friendly associations, and do not involve any great amount of expense or trouble. Refreshments for a "reception" evening—that is, one of a series—may be of the least complex character, while the regular reception-days call for no entertainment at all. A monster reception, where hundreds are invited, and the coming and going is continuous, is provided for by a restaurateur, who supplies a table, which is kept standing during the hours appointed for the levee, and from which visitors help themselves, before leaving, to whatever they find which is best suited to their taste.

Dinner parties are undoubtedly a necessity of modern life, but they are, to our mind, the least agreeable form of hospitality. No one should pretend to give dinner parties who does not possess a handsome, cheerful dining-room, a well-trained staff of servants, abundant means, and a first-rate cook. A dinner is a very elaborate affair; it consumes nearly all the time which the guests pass in the house where they are invited to partake of it; it is what they are specially invited for; it is a mark of honor and respect which you wish to pay to persons, more or less distinguished, with whom you may be personally but little acquainted, and with whom you may have but little in common.

Very intimate friends are rarely invited to ceremonious dinners, excepting upon occasions when a family or national festival gives it a more than common significance. When we invite our friends, we want to enjoy their society; we like to see them for a longer time, and talk to them more intimately than is possible.

at a formal dinner. Moreover, we know that our friends will excuse our shortcomings, and expect only what they know we can give them.

There is nothing more pitiful than the awkward embarrassment which results from well-meaning but badly-equipped and unprepared people trying to give a state dinner; the complicated duties of the hostess; the inexperience of the one servant; the endeavors to cover up deficiencies; the want of finish in the details of the *menage*, all render such an attempt most unsatisfactory—an expenditure of strength and money, which yields nothing but humiliation in return. Large houses are impossible to the majority of persons in large cities; and people of limited incomes anywhere should confine their social efforts to such small and familiar gatherings as will give the most pleasure to those who compose them, and best represent the kindly feeling of the host and hostess.



How New York Spends the Summer.—The dweller in the country revels in the idea that New York suffers during the summer season a premonition of that purgatory to which it is likely to be doomed for its wickedness. Undoubtedly the pent-up denizens of the narrow courts, and lanes and alleys, and single rooms of the over-crowded tenement houses, do long for space, for a breath of untainted air, for shade, and rest beneath it. But New York is not a wilderness, even in summer, and that its stay-at-homes have at least brief seasons of enjoyment, and do what they can to lighten the burdens of their poorer neighbors, a brief summary of some of their efforts and pleasures will show.

One of the small, but important sources of enjoyment in New York through the summer, is the constant succession of fruits. In many parts of the country, and even at the most expensive hotels, fruit is often scarce, of poor quality, and confined to one or two varieties.

In New York the sources of supply are so numerous that scarcity is hardly ever known, and though the prices are always high—the number of hands through which it passes, and the perishable nature of the article, rendering this necessary—yet so greatly is it appreciated, that few, even of the poorest, but set aside some portion of their income specially for its purchase, while not a few relinquish meat in its favor.

This love of fruit and appreciation of its valuable qualities increases in the ratio of its production, and will doubtless continue to do so; so that no matter how largely the market may be supplied, the prices will improve as they have done within the past five years rather than grow less.

A day at the Central Park can hardly be classed as a summer recreation—it belongs to all the year round; nevertheless, it is an always new pleasure, particularly to the little ones, who, on certain days, can romp on such smooth, and soft, and cleanly shaven grass, as you do not often see in the country—ride in quaint little goat carriages (babies in baby car-

riages), sail on the lake, eat ice cream in the rotunda, swing, or ride in the run-arounds, to their hearts' content; and finish up, if they are not too tired, with a peep at the rare birds and animals, and a laugh at the monkey tricks of Jacko.

Elder New Yorkers prefer to take the Park early in the morning, either for riding, driving, or walking, they having little time to spend away from business, and that little not in the middle of the day.

Long Branch, the summer capital, and the finest sea-side resort in the world, is within easy distance for a day's trip, for the benefit of those who have not "a cottage by the sea," and neither time nor means to expend upon apartments for the season, at the Ocean House or West End.

Every one ought to go to Long Branch at least once every season, and we presume nearly every New Yorker does. The broad sweep of ocean, and the ocean drive, are not paralleled on this continent, or in Europe. No scene in the world can match the view from the wide central, second-story piazza of Leland's Ocean Hotel; it is worth traveling hundreds of miles to see.

Nor is the Hotel itself unworthy inspection and admiration. Occupying twelve acres of ground, its lawns studded with marble vases, its miles of wide piazza strung with hanging baskets filled with trailing vines and flowers, and in the evening aflame with globes of light; it is one of the characteristic institutions of the American people.

Only from eight to ten weeks does the season last; previous to this it is a waste of land; immediately after it lapses back into primeval desert, the village back of the shore alone preserving evidences of human life and habitation. Yet, for this brief space, genius and enterprise create a paradise of luxury, filled with every evidence of modern skill and civilization.

The trip from New York to Long Branch occupies but two hours—one hour by boat to Sandy Hook, one hour by rail thence to Long Branch—and is not only cheap (one dollar for the whole), but easy, and every way delightful. The boats are luxurious, the railroad comfortable, and with the single exception of the want of a passenger-way on the New York Pier, there is nothing that need deter the most delicate lady from making the trip alone.

Short day trips may also be made to West Point, Cornwall-on-the-Hudson, and various other attractive localities. Trips to Saratoga, Catskill and Newport, take a somewhat longer time, though a very charming short trip may be, and often is made to Saratoga "over Sunday," starting Saturday afternoon, returning Monday morning. For this trip you take the People's Line of boats at 5 p. m., and sleep as sound as if you were at home in your own bed, arriving refreshed, and ready for a whole day of real enjoyment at hotel or friendly mansion, in Saratoga.

On arriving, before eating, we recommend a visit to the Hathorn Spring, only a step below Congress Hall; it is not so well known, but possesses twice the virtue of Congress Spring and retains it when bottled.

From the foregoing it will be seen that New Yorkers have many ways of making life endurable, even during the warm weather, and that if they suffer a taste of purgatory they do not always know it.

Nor are they entirely forgetful of their poorer neighbors, who cannot go even upon "short trips" to Newport, Long Branch, West Point, and Saratoga. Mis-

sions, Sunday-schools, and charitable institutions, have their annual excursions and picnics, and that none may be forgotten, a series of excursions for poor children have been instituted for the past two summers, mainly through the influence and efforts of the New York *Daily Times*, which have been productive of happiness to thousands, and are in the highest degree creditable to the philanthropic spirit of the originators of the movement.

Some half dozen of these excursions have been given in all, and their magnitude may be conceived when it is understood that from one thousand to one thousand five hundred boys and girls participate in them at one time!

Speaking of the fourth of the series, which took place 12th of July, the *Times* of the 13th says: "Generally the children selected for these picnics are of a rough character, but yesterday the little ones, taken from the purlieus of the Fifth and Eighth Wards, were as wild as it is possible for children brought up in the midst of civilization to be. No two of them had even caps or hats alike, except so far as dilapidation was concerned, and in that they were uniform. Their clothing was, in the majority of instances, mere patches of rags, the original color of which it was not only difficult but impossible to detect. Some had shoes, others slippers, but the most of them had easy fitting sandals of mud as a covering, which, if not ornamental were very economical. But then, as some folks say, they are used to it, and therefore do not miss what would be considered an actual necessity by the more favored portion of humanity. Of this ill-clad portion of juvenile society, there were yesterday 1,317 on *The Times* excursion, and with very few exceptions all were boys and girls of the street.

The excursion consisted of a sail up the Hudson, upon a fine boat, provided with a band and plenty of eatables, which were distributed at proper intervals. A visit to a charming grove, a salt water bath—provision being made for the girls as well as the boys, at different points, and games, and dancing, *ad libitum*. The following is a summary of the cost of one excursion:

Barge, tug and boat.....	\$130 00
1,800 rolls.....	18 00
1,200 sponge cakes.....	86 00
320 loaves of bread.....	32 00
110 pounds of beef.....	19 80
225 pounds of ham.....	42 75
35 pounds tongue.....	7 70
53 pounds butter.....	16 96
Half barrel sugar.....	12 00
Band.....	55 00
Punch and Judy.....	12 00
Steward's stores.....	10 00
210 quarts ice-cream.....	73 50
Extra boat.....	5 00
Three cedar tubs.....	3 75
Citric acid.....	3 00
Box lemons.....	12 50
Printing.....	12 00
Ice.....	3 00
270 quarts milk.....	16 20
Cartage.....	5 50
Steward and waiters.....	46 00
Extra help.....	3 50
Coffee and tea.....	8 84
Petty cash.....	9 42
Total.....	\$589 02

This makes the average expense for each child taken about 44½ cents.

