



HAIL TO THE HEAT.

YOU have read about the imaginative and unhappy wight who is constrained to sit down in the coolest spot he can find in mid-summer, with the blazing sun on the closed blinds and the ice tinkling in the glass, to write a Christmas Sketch for a special "number" then in course of final preparation. Or, perhaps, he comes in out of a January blizzard, shakes the snow off his overcoat and rubs his ears to see if they are really frozen, and then sits down to indite a Seaside Idyll for the Mid-summer "number" of the publication which commands his time. But this hymn of joy is nothing of that sort. There is no imagination required to picture to one's self what is meant by "hot weather" as I pen these lines. It is "dollars to doughnuts," indeed, that it is you, gelatinous reader, who will have to exercise your imagination—or your memory—to get into the proper spirit to appreciate them; for it is altogether likely that the "tropical spell" will have passed before they are printed. If it has not—but why anticipate?

THIS is "the real thing"—also the genuine "hot stuff." I am attired—as I write—in a costume which would only seem adequate in pictures of South Sea Islanders who did not desire to appear over-dressed. Being a man, I could not go out into Society this way. Evening is approaching, and, with it, a promise of relief; but, as I look out of the window, the yellow sun still pours itself steadily over everything in sight and the notes of the birds come from the nearby trees, drowsy and pessimistic. I miss two sounds which would make it seem hotter if I were in the real country—the thirsty "tuck-tuck" of the live-baked hen and the whizzing dizzy note of the over-dried grass-hopper. But the delivery boys are cross—the street cars have an iron clang—the irrepressible children are not playing out of doors—the "trip-trip-trip" of the horses on the asphalt seems to strike sparks in the brain. Every sense proclaims the fact that it is stiflingly hot; and every sense seems also to insist that it holds me personally responsible for the circumstance.

BUT then every person does that too. I happen to be one of those individuals who like a certain amount of heat; and the consequence is that, when it gets "hot," my friends all talk as if I had ordered it. The truth is that I can enjoy a good deal of heat if I am left alone with it. Let me dress as I like—lounges where I like—do nothing as I like—and the absolute invitation to laziness which overpowering heat conveys so gently to folks, fits in cosily with my much-to-be-deplored nature. Heat pronounces more imperatively than anything else, the First Commandment—"Thou Shalt NOT Work." Yes; that was the First Commandment. I do not mean the First of the Second Set of Commandments—the Ten Commandments—which were only launched against humanity long years after it had fallen from its pristine purity. I mean the real First Commandment which echoed musically and soothingly down the tropical avenues of Eden when our "first parents" still lived softly on their matchless Estates and did not know the meaning of the plebian word—"Work." All this trouble about earning one's bread in the sweat of one's brow came later, you will remember. Work is the child of Wickedness; and it has always seemed more natural to me to be Good.

I THINK that the scientists make no mistake in looking for Eden in the Tropics. There is where it would be. I always like the Edenic life most—to say nothing of looking like an Edenite—in blistering hot weather. Then I could gather the fruit of the Good Trees, and sit in their deep shade to eat it, and care nothing for any occupation more diverting than attaching appropriate names to such animals as impinged on the placid picture of silent summer. It wouldn't matter that there was no one to play golf with—it would be too hot. Even Eve's simple taste in costuming is seen to be quite natural when we remember that she lived in a tropical garden. Clothes are to a large extent a by-product

of Cold; and Cold is an enemy of life—just as Work is an enemy of joy. I know that there are unconfined lunatics in Canada who talk of both Cold and Work as if they were blessings; but then there are farmers in Switzerland who insist that a field cannot be really fertile unless it is stood up on edge and irrigated from a glacier. We all tend to regard the evils we cannot escape as benefits.

THE papers are full of "health hints" these days, telling us how not to feel the heat. But that is entirely the wrong system. We do not want to know how to escape feeling the heat—we want to know how to feel and enjoy it—how to benefit by it. Nothing is more amusing than to see people in Canada, who spend nine months out of the year grumbling at the cold, rushing off toward the North Pole, as soon as the cold leaves them, to find it again. They want to be cold except when they can be cold; and then, if they are rich enough, they

rush down to Florida so that they can be hot. Heat, treated rightly, is a source of pure joy. Why, it even makes riding in a street car a pleasure. You get where the breeze flows over you, and the sun dances on the swimming pavements alongside, and the white summer people sit in regal ease all along your path of progress, and everybody is out of doors and the world is visibly inhabited; and you will store up pictures in your mind which will mitigate many a bitter day next winter when snow-covered storm doors cover the porches and the verandahs are banks of forbidding ice.

THEN think what heat does to all water-sides. Lie in the shade by a moving river, just rippled by the breeze, looking up stream into the tropic haze that lies over the water, watching at times the heat waves rise from the golden hay field behind, motionless, restful, chained to inaction by the silken bonds of heat, determined upon nothing except that you will not move till the cool of the evening. Ah, but you change your mind. You can slip down just under the fringe of trees, drop off your clothes; and you are in the water, with not a human being nearer than the clattering bridge far up the stream. What has winter to match it? Nothing that I know of. Count me every time for the Sun Worship, for Eden, for the First Commandment, for those glorious old idlers, our First Parents.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

The World's Greatest Aquatic Spectacle



Henley on the Thames, a Regatta Which Has Escaped the Picturesque Pen of Mr. Kipling.



The Royal Barge, From Which Their Majesties Viewed the Regatta. The Barge is Two Hundred Years Old.