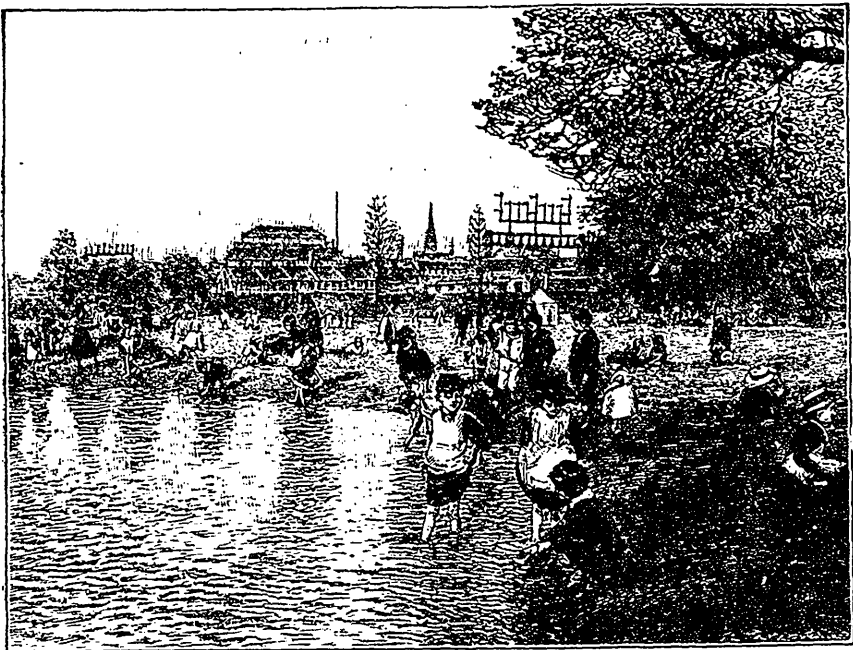
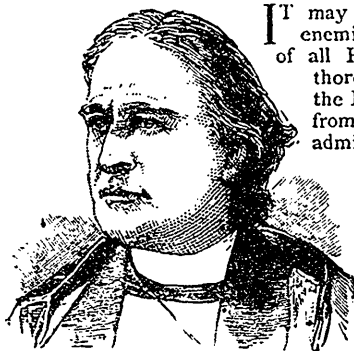




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ARCHBISHOP BENSON'S FRIENDS.



THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.

IT may be that the Archbishop of Canterbury has some enemies, but we are certain that he has many friends; and of all His Grace's numerous friends there are none more thorough than the working people of Lambeth, to whom the Lambeth Palace meadows are open freely for recreation from May to September. To prevent overcrowding the admission is by tickets, which are distributed through the local clergy. The grounds comprise a large area, flanked on the south by the London and South-Western Railway, and a good-sized pond in the north-west corner is not the least attractive feature. Some of the young followers of Izaak Walton ply the rod here with a devotion worthy of the true angler; and as their "takes" are not large, even the local fishmongers placidly tolerate the sport without feeling aggrieved. It is worth a visit to see the hundreds of boys and girls enjoying themselves to the full without let or hindrance in all those innocent romps in which healthy children delight; and one can hardly believe that this is a patch of the overcrowded five-millioned-peopled metropolis of the world. Cricket and rounders for the boys, skipping ropes and a "ring-a-ring of roses" for the girls, battledore and shuttle-cock, kite-flying, tick, and other odds and ends of sport, varied on high days by the performance of some local band, and always crowned with rippling peals of laughter, which, after all, is the very finest music in the world,—Lambeth fields are, indeed, the place in which to spend a happy day. Now and again the Archbishop, with Mrs. Benson, or some other member of the household, pay a surprise visit to his large family, and are greeted with an enthusiasm which shows how much His Grace is beloved by his poorer neighbours.

There are knowing little children, who have somehow or other found out that the Archbishop has some big pockets, and that oddly enough, now and again, these pockets contain stray pennies, which have nestled away between packets of sweets; and it is said that occasionally, when there are not too many people about, there have been hastily arranged foot races, in which the stakes have been provided—yes, and even held, by a grave dignitary. Well, well, sometimes when I have seen the Archbishop taking part in an imposing public ceremony, I have thought that perhaps that pleasant smile which lights up his happy face is the result of his having had a ten minutes' romp with the poor children at Lambeth half an hour previously. Who knows?

F. S.