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## TAKING HOLIDAY.

I am an enthusiastic believer in hard work, and never cease to give thanks for the blessed curse of labour. The thistle and the sedge grow wild, but things worth the having must be cultivated. The grand struggle of a life is first against indolence, and then against avarice. The faculties of the mind are developed by exercise, just as the limbs of the body. We have discovered that fact—or the fact has discovered us—and the civilized world is a world of industrious workers. The danger is that we shall do too much and get to the end of our energies too soon.

Men cannot go on and on, year in and year out, like mills grinding corn. The tension must be taken off now and then, or the chains will snap. One good feature of the age is our mode of holiday making. We work harder while we are about it than our fathers and mothers did, but we rest better and more thoroughly than they ever knew how. We have developed a taste for country quiet, where weary brains can rest unpained for a time by the jar and jangle of city life; we have our sea-side resorts, where we can watch the waves, or bathe in them, and indulge in every kind of mood for which the mind has capacity—and where anxious mothers can take their daughters, sure and certain that they will be able to watch them through the intricacies of a mild flirtation which they may hope will end in something that is really a gain, but is technically and facetiously called a loss—and where, once more, young city swells can expose their most bewitching manners to the balmy influences of the sea breezes and the before-mentioned daughters' eyes, and make manifest to partners and onlookers the elegant education their toes and heels have received.

Yes, fashionable watering places are a clear gain to our common humanity—counting those who spend their money and those who make it there—and Old Orchard Beach is a fashionable watering place, and so a clear gain to sundry tourists and hotel-keepers. The place is wonderfully adapted to the purpose for which it is used; in fact it could hardly be utilized in any other way. It is a *Beach*, and but little else. The mutual relations of land and water have been undergoing a process of change for ages back, it appears, and the result is a magnificent stretch of brown sand, where those aweary of city life and trouble do for a brief period forget all about depreciated stocks, broken banks, and family matters in general.

Let me tell you a little in detail how we live and move and breathe, and what we look upon, at Orchard Beach, in the State of Maine; where Neal Dow resides, and liquor selling is prohibited—only, *entre nous*, Neal Dow is not a custom's officer, nor does he "run" a hotel, nor does he inspect every barber's back premises, nor does he make it impossible for Portland to turn more drunk men on the streets every day than Montreal.

The sea is first, of course; that brings us here, and keeps us here, and but for the sea we should have gone somewhere else. But for the fact that the poetic mood is eminently unsuited to my general constitution, and in some degree dangerous to that same, I would make an effort to describe the fringe of ocean we are permitted to look upon, telling how the crested waves rush and roar, and indulge in "unmeasurable laughter," &c., but I am recruiting my energies, and can only say that the sea here behaves itself just as it does in many other places, and those who wish to know more, I must refer to Byron, and Kirke White, and others who have written in poetic form what the wild waves are always saying.

To turn from the sea to the bathers therein is a natural and easy transition. Everybody bathes—the "fish, flesh, fowl and good red herring" of society together. The costumes are, on the whole, about as ugly as costumes can be, and in diabolical opposition to all grace of figure. It is a marvellous thing that in this age of invention no one has discovered how to make a bathing suit in which mortals may regard themselves with something like complacency; but the benefactor has yet to appear. The ordinary suit of the masculine

gender is not exactly a washed coal sack, though it very much resembles that, nor is it exactly a coloured pair of stockings with the feet cut off; but it is an unhappy combination of those things, with some other evil devices thrown in.

Now, bathing is a science; it doesn't come to us naturally, like the measles, or the dream of love in a cottage; it has to be learned in order to be practised with grace and real enjoyment. Swimming is very easy to those who can do it—so is floating, and so is diving; but it looks hard to the uninitiated. There are many different styles affected by bathers, all of them excellent in their way. Some take it with a rush, a plunge, a swim; some walk in step by step and slowly, as if making an effort to send all the blood up to the head; some stride in until up to the ankles in water, and then turn a mute, blue face to heaven as if appealing for a hot iron or two just to warm it up, and when the sentence, "It is cold to-day," has broken bit by bit through their chattering teeth one is tempted to feel that after all, when the sea was made, there should have been some consideration for men and women who are doomed to live in hot-houses in winter and to drink iced water in summer. A very popular method of bathing may be described as *bobbing*—the act being accompanied by an incipient scream, with an occasional gurgle thrown in; the gurgle is not really intended as a part of the chant, but is purely accidental, and arises from the fact that when a head goes under water and the mouth of that head is wide open, some portion of the water will enter the mouth—hence the gurgle. Ladies are said to gurgle oftener than men; but that may be only a malicious libel.

Of hotel life here and elsewhere—of how some behave, and others misbehave—how we dress and make merry—I will speak some other time; for there is nothing of the sort at Orchard Beach which is peculiar to the place. But there is an institution here concerning which I have long desired to have some personal knowledge,—I mean a *Camp Meeting*. It is a part of the programme for general enjoyment, like the bathing in the morning and the dancing at night. A little way back of the Old Orchard House is a grove, and in the grove is the Camping ground. The faithful come in crowds; they put up tents, and go through a regular course of meetings. The place for general assembly is a natural amphitheatre, with seating accommodation for perhaps four thousand people. The audience is composed for the most part of typical Yankees,—tall, lank and leathern-jawed, but severely devout. Each one has a Bible, and refers to it whenever a passage is quoted by the preacher,—whether to impress it more deeply on the memory, or to see that the quotation was correctly given, I cannot tell; but the Bible is frequently referred to, and sometimes notes or marks are made in the margin. That the people are in earnest there can be no doubt; they come here in search of religious sensations; they catch at every strong expression of the preacher, and rejoice equally at the thought of mercy and judgment.

The preaching is peculiar, but not nearly so grotesque as I had expected. The preachers are grave and earnest men, having a considerable acquaintance with the letter of the Bible. But the pomposity of the men is revolting. They settle all the doctrinal difficulties, over which thinking men have fought for ages, out of hand; they pound the hardest Unitarianism into jelly by a few trenchant sentences, or a joke, or a story of some dumfounded champion of that form of belief; they treat Scripture scenes and character with the most condescending familiarity. I heard a "Dr." preach on the resurrection of Lazarus. He opened by making the modest request that the ministers present would take notes of his discourse and reproduce it to their several congregations. Then he told us all about the Bethany family, their position in society, and their probable income. When the brother was dead, and the sisters heard that Jesus was coming, Martha said "Guess we'd better go and meet him, Mary," but "Mary jest sot there in the house; she worn't agoing to do a thing," &c. At another time the "Dr." discoursed on "The difficulty of going to hell." I am bound to say that the announcement of the theme was well received by the audience, even some of the visitors from the hotels looking for a little while as if they too might dare to hope; but I imagine that they got small comfort from what they heard. The obstacles in the way to hell were "good sermons," at which a few groaned, a few tittered, and the rest remained ominously silent; next, "Christian friends," further described by the preacher as "picket guards" thrown out to prevent people from going to hell; and, lastly, "the judgments of God." This afforded a fine opportunity for the Dr. to tell what he knew and imagined. He told us that often "the Lord puts a barricade of coffins" in a man's way to perdition. And then came story after