

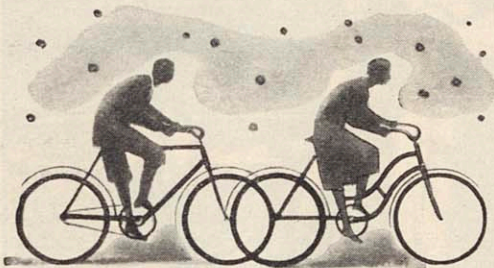


DON'T

SLEEP THROUGH THE SUMMER

by
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DECORATIONS BY EVERETT HENRY



WHEN I was a boy, I remember seeing, in a comic paper, a picture of a family at a railway station, with their bags and traveling equipment, about to board a train. The smallest member of the group, a boy, was waving his hand at the sky, and calling out, "Goodbye, God! We're going away for the summer!" And at about the same time, I saw another cartoon. This represented a city church, with the main portal locked. Over the door was the legend, *Closed for the Summer*. And on the front steps stood the Devil himself, grinning at having command of the situation.

The majority of people, either consciously or unconsciously, associate both intellectual and spiritual activity with the thermometer. Opera and symphony concerts begin with the first frosts in October, and cease in the first honey breath of April; most schools and colleges open their doors early in autumn, and close them in June; in evangelical churches and communities, "revivals," if they still have them, usually begin in January. Whoever heard of a revival beginning in June? When the earth revives in May and puts on newness of life, mind and spirit in men and women seem to lose vigor. Here is one more of many differences that separate man from the lower animals: the lower animals sleep through the winter and we sleep through the summer.

There is no doubt the human body needs every now and then a vacation; yet the late Russell Sage declared he never had taken a day's vacation in his life. He lived to be over eighty years of age, and at his death had accumulated one million dollars for every year he had

lived. We are familiar with the proverb, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy"; but a contributor to F. P. A.'s column in the *New York World* suggested a revised version, which is perhaps nearer to the actual facts, and which would have pleased Russell Sage, if he had once in his life read a humorous article. This is the proverb as amended: "All work and no play makes a lot of jack."

Granted that the revised version is true, as I am afraid it is; doesn't it illustrate a deeper and more important truth, that money itself sometimes does not pay? There is no doubt that Russell Sage enjoyed saving money as much as the average man enjoys spending it; as much, yes, but was it the same quality of enjoyment?

The chief point I wish to make is this: whether we do or do not plan to have a vacation this summer, why should we check all mental growth—why should we arrest development? Why not, even if we travel abroad, or go into the Canadian woods, or camp in Wyoming, or stay at home, why not continue to enjoy mental activity?

For my part, I am just as religious in July as I am in February; the music of Beethoven is just as inspiring to me in August as it is in December; a good book is just as acceptable to me in June as it is in March.

Everybody should have a *hospitable* mind. The human mind should be like a good hotel, open every day in the year to all guests except criminals. The minds of many people become hermetically closed after they are fifty; no new idea can get in; and if a new idea appears in the neighborhood, it is viewed with suspicion. Such persons, after they are fifty, live on their own intellectual fat.

Other people check their minds with their overcoats on entering the theater; on taking a train; especially on taking a steamer; and still more people close their minds when they close their houses for the summer.

NOW let us suppose you have the money and the leisure to take a vacation of two or three months this summer. Pleasant as such a supposition is, it is certainly no iridescent dream. Hundreds of thousands of Americans will be traveling in Europe this summer; if there is any commoner sight than an American on the Strand in London or on the Avenue de l'Opera in Paris, I don't know where to find it. Just as it is now often remarked that if a preacher wishes to preach to Harvard or Yale or Princeton undergraduates on Sunday, he should preach at a woman's college, so it is true that if you wish to

behold unmistakable Americans, a sure place to find them in July, August, September, is in Europe.

Although I hate to advise anything that leads to the separation of families, I think it is best, in taking a vacation, for young people to be together and for old people to be together, and not to attempt the unsuccessful experiment of mixing age and youth. Boys and girls, young men and women, require a different kind of vacation from that better adapted to maturity. To put it bluntly, what is sport for youth is death to age.

I AM about to advise a bicycle trip in Europe. It is the cheapest, most healthful, most thorough, most rewarding way to see England and the Continent. Young people who take this method of transportation will be soaked to the skin by rain, they will put up at primitive hotels where there are no luxuries and almost no conveniences, they will have occasional punctures and unlimited annoyances, they will on certain days become physically exhausted, they will eat indigestible food and drink water filled with germs; *and they will have a gorgeous time*. When they think it over afterwards, the inconveniences and annoyances will be forgotten, and the whole expedition will shine in a golden glow of reminiscence.

This is because they are young and healthy, so that exposure to the inclemencies of the weather, unpleasant hotel bedrooms, cheap food and strange water, can hurt them not at all; and fatigue at night is forgotten in the morning. But old people who set out to accompany the young on bicycle journeys . . . !

Young men should go in parties not larger than four; four is better than five, and two is better than three. Occasionally it is a good plan for them to separate, and *bicycle alone* through certain districts, with the agreement to meet later. When I was twenty-five years old, we bicycled as a party of five along the Rhine from Cologne to Switzerland, as a party of three through Switzerland, and two from Geneva across France to Dieppe. When my classmate and I reached London, he wished to wheel up the Great North Road to Edinburgh, and I refused to leave England without seeing Stratford-on-Avon; so we agreed to separate, and to meet two weeks later at Liverpool. Well, the first day I was unspeakably lonesome; but after the first day I rejoiced in my liberty. I picked up English acquaintances everywhere, and I shall never forget running accidentally into Billy (Turn to page 101)