

Mother, We've Nothing To Do!

Holiday Games for the Children



CONTRARY to many people's beliefs, baby himself does not require a holiday, especially when he has a garden at home, writes Sister Cooper, S.R.N., in the *London Daily Mail*. A patch of natural shade, where he can sleep in his pram and play in his playpen and probably have some of his meals, supplies his simple needs for fresh air and quiet surroundings.

He will, of course, have his sun and air baths daily, when weather permits, and if there is an upstairs balcony or verandah to the house he can sleep out with advantage, at any rate from 6 to 10 p.m.

He should not sleep in his pram at this time, even though the garden may seem enticing, for his regular routine is best adhered to, and to substitute pram for cot at 6 p.m. may bring bedtime difficulties later.

For the first six months of life baby is better lying out of doors in his pram than being taken shopping or for walks, and on a very wet day he can be in a porch or verandah or in front of an open window, so that he gets the maximum of fresh air and is not stifled under the hood and mackintosh of his pram. An open shed is ideal when weather is inclement.

After six months an occasional afternoon walk is good for him, for he can, by this time, appreciate fresh places and people and things, particularly other children, animals, birds, and flowers. During really hot weather, however, dusty lanes or crowded roads will not be of any benefit, and to trudge wearily forth with the nursery folk is only trying to everyone's temper.

Some mothers say that to go for a walk even under tropical conditions is easier than answering the perpetual question, "What can we do?" which playing in the garden entails.

Actually, this need not be so if a few special garden occupations are provided.

Baby's day we have already outlined. His wants are simple—a ground-sheet for his pen, with his bricks, cotton reels, coloured rubber animals, and a rag book will provide the amusement and occupation he needs. If gnats or flies are troublesome, some of the strong-smelling anti-insect preparations, smeared on his pillow or his clothes, will protect him. He will, of course,

have some freedom out of his pen, and will no doubt find the lawn or garden path an excellent exploratory playground. Cotton crepe rompers over vest and square will be all the clothing he needs, except, of course, for the sun hat when necessary and a cardigan for cold days. In this way ironing and home laundry are reduced to a minimum.

The older children can spend some time in sun-bathing or bathing suits during really hot weather, without socks and sometimes without shoes. They also can wear cotton crepe dresses, which do away with any need for ironing and considerably lighten wardrobe difficulties.

For occupation, I suggest a sandheap, with some spoons and empty paper bags for shovelling "sugar," as they call it; a zinc bath, with a hose or piece of rubber tubing and a watering-can, and some boats and floating animals. These are all dear to the heart of two and three-year-olds.

The older folk suffer from an over-abundance of energy and high spirits, so give them a climbing frame or a ladder fixed to a box, wall, or tank, and a few old hassocks for jumping games.

A jumping hole is a great joy—one has only to watch children on the beach to realise this. It is easily made for the garden by a shallow pit filled with straw. "Not worth the trouble," you will say; but get someone to dig one and then show it to your four-year-old, and you will change your mind!

The joy of the ladder is enhanced if it is fixed to a box about 4ft. high, to which, at the other side, a slide is attached. This can be bought or made at home from a thick plank rubbed down with sandpaper and polished with floor wax. To run up the ladder and then sail down the slide is truly a soul-satisfying occupation to the very young and hilarious.

Of course, a swing, seesaw, and the usual garden amusements are great fun. Tree-climbing is another favourite pursuit—children very seldom come to harm with this, for if left to themselves they won't go beyond their capabilities, and one finds the eldest at the top and the youngest on the bottom branch.

