

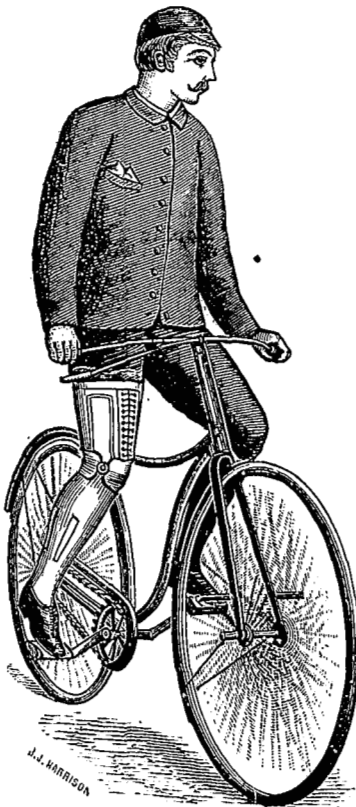
Gravesend (London, Chatham and Dover pier), so that those who would, could join it at any of these piers. After these few stoppages, we had an unbroken run to Southend, I, on the way, viewing from my snug little corner the beautiful scenery that lay stretched out on each side of me. "All Nature is beautiful," and these glimpses that we town folk get of it from time to time, seem only to impress one the more and relieve the weariness that perhaps only the moment before had been depressing us.

I spoke just now of my "snug little corner," so let me picture to your mind's eye a few of my comfortable surroundings. First, the upper deck of this steamer is certainly a very fine one, and commands a good view from almost any position; it is also fitted up with the non-collapsible floating seats (which would form rafts in case of accident), but these of course being stationary, an inconvenience might be felt were it not for the plentiful supply of lounging deck chairs that were provided; and in one of these I rested where nothing but the open bulwarks divided me from the sea, and the buzz of the conversation of my fellow-passengers acted as an accompaniment to my own thoughts. How delightful is a peaceful rest like this; but Nature will not be forgotten, so from the sublime, the cravings

of hunger made me eagerly reach for a little basket, that a few hours ago (or even less) I would ruthlessly have pushed away; but it is well that our friends are persevering in these things, as the thoughtfully "put up" lunch saved both my temper and pocket. So in this quiet little nook I partook of my refreshment without losing for one moment the benefit of the sea breeze, or anything that was to be seen, which mostly consisted now of pretty yachts sprinkled here and there over the wide expanse of water, with their white sails flying in the wind as if trying to rival the sea-gulls in their whiteness.

The next excitement was our arrival at Clacton, where the visitors had collected on the pier to see us land, and cries from all sides invited you to spend your money on a dinner or tea, a drive or shrimps, and the hour that is usually allowed you here gives plenty of time for any of these "attractions," according to your fancy.

The returning time is four p.m., and everyone seemed merrier for their short sojourn on land. Even the music from the band of the steamer, that, thanks to the Company's forethought, had been provided, sounded sweeter than it had earlier in the day; and so we sailed away, feeling that, although our "day off" was coming to a close,



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