

of this Uncle William. He was a very eccentric brother of Charlie's father. It was supposed that he was wealthy, and as he had no children of his own, some people had thought that when Charlie married on a small salary, Uncle William would have helped the young folks out. But he had never made a sign, and as Charlie himself had never expected anything or looked for help from the old gentleman, he and Molly had not been disappointed. Now, however, Uncle William had written, and this was what he said:—

“‘NEPHEW CHARLES,—You have been married a year. I suppose by this time you have found out how difficult it is to make both ends meet. I gave you no wedding-present when you married, and I have never offered you help. I acted thus advisedly because I believe that it is a good thing for every man and woman to find out for himself and herself what is both the use and the uselessness of money, for it is a fact that money is worth a great deal up to a point, and beyond that point it is worth nothing at all. Half the world, it seems to me, makes a mistake on one of these points, the other half on the other. Yet I doubt not that you are a good deal wiser on these matters than you were twelve months ago. I therefore write to tell you that I intend to make you my heir. You will have my property at my death, and so long as I live I shall allow you a fixed sum per annum, the amount of which I will discuss with you when I see you. Meantime, I send you the enclosed cheque.

“‘Your eccentric Uncle,

“‘WILLIAM.’

“We all looked at one another. ‘This is becoming ridiculous,’ said Molly; but I told her that it was quite natural and usual. Was I not right? It is always thus. Those who have, get a little more; and those who are in difficulties get further into the mire. If the young folks had been behindhand in their

accounts, the post would have brought a bill which had escaped their memory, and which must be paid immediately.

“Before we had recovered our astonishment, the celebrated Jenny came in. Perhaps you wonder that I have not mentioned Jenny before. The reason is that I have not seen much of Jenny. She is very busy. So is Mr. Malcolm. They seem, too, to be engaged with the same things. Moreover, there is a happy look in Jenny's eyes, and a smile on her lips. When no one is looking at her she laughs and sometimes sings. As for Mr. Malcolm, he is most absurdly and perseveringly important. Can you tell what it all means, you two old ladies, who are sitting quietly at home by the fire? I think I can. Another couple are going to make experiments in house-keeping.

“When Jenny heard of Uncle William's intentions she was very much pleased. ‘You won't have to plan so carefully now, Molly,’ she said; ‘you will be able to spend without a thought.’ But Molly said, ‘No, that was not the case at all. The amount of income was nothing, the relation between income and expenditure was everything. The right balance must be preserved, no matter what the amount to be disposed of might be. We have succeeded,’ she added, ‘because we have learnt how to make income overlap expenditure. We should be poor even though we had thousands a year, if we could not accomplish that feat.’”

ON THE EAST COAST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF “THE BRIDGE BETWEEN,” “THEIR SUMMER DAY,” ETC. ETC.



HE east coast has many attractions during a hot summer. A cooler breeze steals over the sea than that which fans us at the watering-places farther south, a greater freshness is in the air, there is more life and not less brightness in all the surroundings. Even the waves sparkling in the sunshine seem to fall with a crisper, swifter sound upon the shingly beach than they do farther round the corner, where the island faces the south and is first sighted by the swallows. Do any as they

sit watching the great waves coming in faster and faster, each seeming as though it brought some message from the ships far out at sea which from sheer hurry it cannot deliver, ever think what the same little place in which they are staying will look like a few

months later, or looked like a few months back—in the month of March, for instance? There is a place we have in our mind as we write; it is gay enough now in all its summer bravery. In March, that wild bleak March of this year, it would have been difficult for those who throng it now even to recognise. A little strip of a place calling itself a town. The arrival of a couple of visitors is so rare in the winter that it is a mild but lasting sensation, and they are regarded with a good deal of curiosity, and some pity; but it is mild inoffensive curiosity, and sleepy inexpressive pity, for in our out-of-the-way watering-place, as in many others, the people only seem to be wholly awake or altogether alive in the bright season and at the profitable time of year. It is an excellent condition, all things considered, for the little town has few enough resources, but in the time of their torpor the needs of the natives are few enough also. Food, of course, they must have; there is excellent meat for those who can afford it; fish is scanty and dear; milk is cheap, and the butter is good save when it tastes over-much of turnips. The difference of butter from turnip-fed cows and hay-fed cows, and from which the farmer's wife churned last, and who

was served from the one and who from the other, is an interesting and agreeable topic of conversation. Fuel is comparatively an easy thing to get; coals are not over-cheap, to be sure, but then the sea, "the great mother" of all these small places, is generous enough in some ways, and gives to one what she takes from another, and never a storm arises but all along the coast are seen the spars, and planks, and beams, and tall masts that once formed part of great ships, which proudly put to sea, and in the end were tossed upon the shore in splinters.

Amusement? Yes, in the course of the winter there is a concert and there are rumours of penny readings, but who performs and who listens, and all that was done, or whether anything was done, are all matters about which they can tell one little. They keep but one eye open to see with, and but one ear open to hear with; how can they be expected to remember or relate aught of such trifles as these? As for reading, there is a reading-room, but it is closed for seven months in the year.

Newspapers? Yes, to be sure, there are the country papers, and sometimes it wiles away a bit of time to read them; but last winter, in which the fishing was bad, pence were too scarce to throw away on papers, "indulging one's curiosity about things that don't concern one;" and times were so bad with them that they had no heart and no desire to try and find out how they had been with others. As for London papers, one copy of the *Times* is taken in the place by a good and worthy gentleman who has lived his life there, and earned his right to have his whims respected; shall he not even take in a threepenny paper at the dull time of year if he wish it? But for a visitor to do so would probably be to have his sanity and his solvency doubted at the same moment. Residents, of course, must be considered; there are a few, very few, well-off people, who for some reason stay in the neighbourhood all the year round, and for these a few copies of an evening paper arrive by the last train from town; but it seems a sad waste of money, no doubt, to the simple fisher-folk if they know of it. A paper every day is extravagant enough, but an evening paper, half a day's news instead of a whole day's, and all because people can't wait till the next morning! Well, well! But it's a strange world, and always in a hurry, and yet of sea and time there are so much and so spare down here—from their point of view.

Politics? No, they never trouble their heads about politics. They know the names of individuals pretty well, and have their preferences, but what the preferences are founded on it would be hard to say; and of parties they also know the names, but not the difference. Why should they? what do parties matter to them? Things do well enough as they are, they would tell you, one side in when the other side is out, and the world going on all the same, anyway. What have they—mostly fisher-folk as they are—to do with Conservatives, or Liberals, or Radicals? The summer comes, and the sky is blue and the sun dances on the water, and the little sails spread out and put

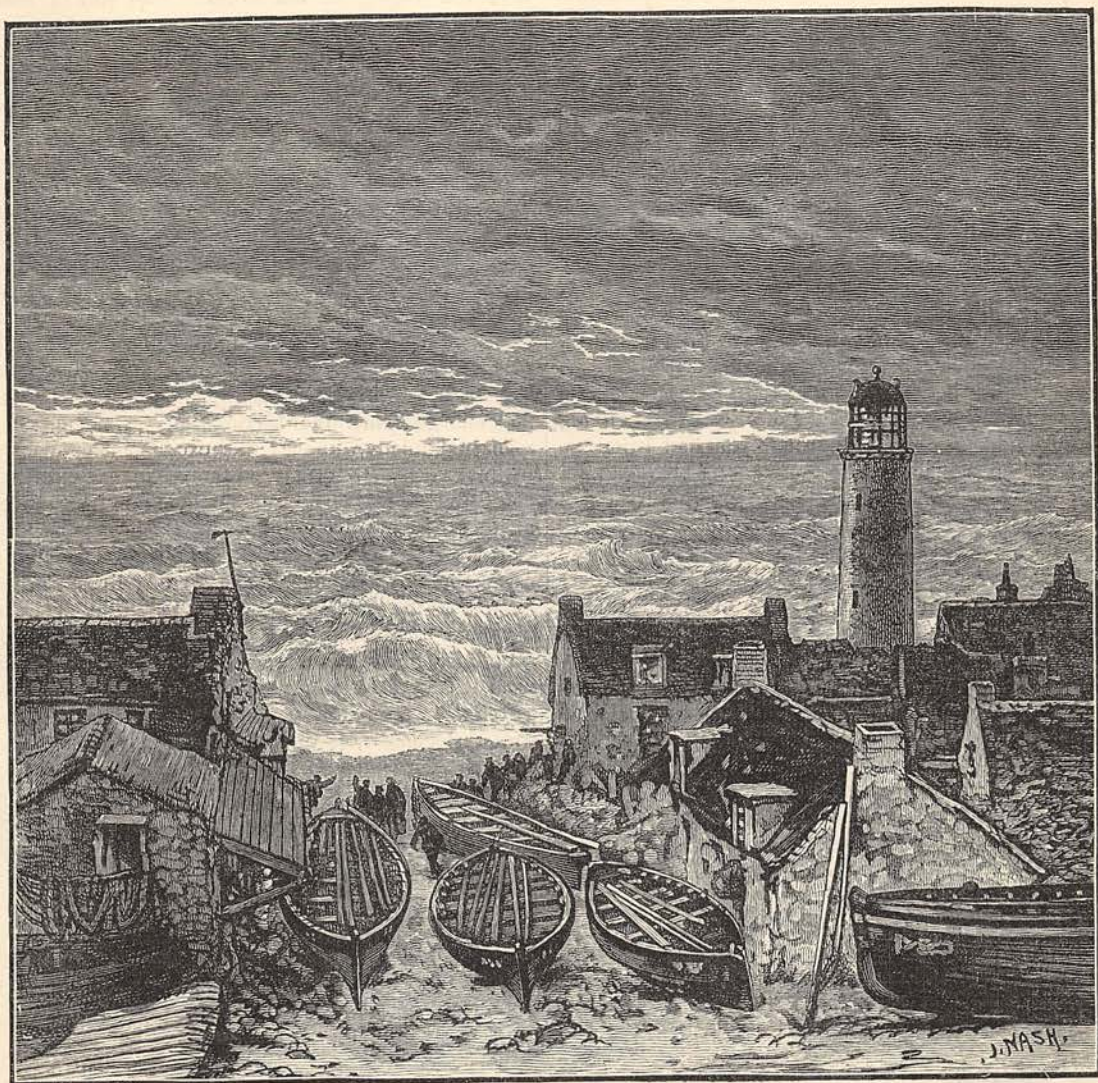
to sea, and maybe the money for the winter rent is saved, and all the place laughs back at the happy water; and gradually the autumn comes, and the last stranger gets him gone, and the long dark nights begin again, and the dread of floods, and the weary waiting for the spring: all these things fill the simple minds here. What have they to do with politics?

There is a line of houses fronting the sea, a line that is not of the terrace description, or in any way like that to be found at the majority of watering-places. No speculative builder as yet has put down his foot in the place and raised up rows of cheap houses and fancy villas, that, while they betoken prosperity, betoken also the ruin of simplicity and the loss of much that is picturesque. One person has built him a house to his own mind, and another has done the same next to it, but in a different fashion.

At one end of the beach there is a hotel, put up by a resident, and by no means of the ordinary seaside description. A red-brick, comfortable-looking little pile, with one side square and the other round, and many windows facing the sea, and a large sign-board on which the name of its proprietor is put up in unusually large gilt letters, and everything about it tempts one to forgive the building for being there. And at the other end there is one little terrace; they who are wise keep their minds from dwelling on it over-much, for it is probably a sign of things to come, but close to it are all manner of dwellings that seem quite in character, to have grown up by accident, just as somehow the whole place does. One man has needed a cottage, and built it; and another a little shop, and it is there; and another has wanted a boat-house, or a workshop, and has managed to raise it, and so it is all along at that part at which it seems the poorer class has had most influence; but nowhere here, any more than further on, have any two put their heads together and said, "Let us make our dwellings alike."

At the back of the sea-front is the town. It consists of one wide street; on either side are houses which match those facing the sea in being of all shapes and sizes, and of different ages. Some of them are mere cottages, few of them are shops, and those that are appear to expect anything rather than customers; they keep their doors shut and generally fastened, and to get in one has to knock or ring, and only wonders that one has not to leave a card, or to bring introductions, in order to get served; though the people are polite enough, with the politeness of those unspoilt by cities, when one once succeeds in getting at them. Jutting out from the main street, that sleepest of streets by day, and darkest of streets by night—for even when there is no moon the lamps are seldom lit, perhaps because the people think an unexpected moon may turn up and do the lighting for them—jutting out from it are a few very narrow streets, almost like those of a southern Continental town.

Far back the country is wild, and flat and barren, scanty of vegetation and thinly populated, and the few habitations are merely the black, red-roofed, half-shanty, half-shed-like ones that are the pecu-



ON THE EAST COAST.

liarity of the place. To be sure there are the salt marshes ; stretching out, they seem to add to the sadness and desolation of the wintry scene. One may walk for miles without meeting a soul, save where now and then near a deserted-looking dwelling, or close to the marshes, perhaps, some gaunt figure suddenly rises up and stands out clear and well defined against the dull grey sky : a figure that appears suddenly and vanishes swiftly, and seems to have no human individuality, but to be a part of the strange weird whole. To the left beyond the marshes is the river, winding in and out towards the sea. One is never tired of imagining that between the river and the sea there is a strange yearning to meet. In all the storms they journey out towards each other ; one could fancy that they were long-parted friends who only stealthily, or in the darkness and the tempests,

might stretch out longing hands across the black space between them.

And in front of all this is still the sea, with its great waves towering higher and higher only to topple over at last, and break their heads upon the shingly beach : a hungry sea that is for ever trying to creep nearer and nearer to the homes of men. It has crept inland a whole mile within the last so many years, we are afraid to say the precise number. Not over-long since a whole street flourished beyond the present line of sea-front, but gradually the sea stole in towards it, until at last it swept it quite away. At low water the old line of life is plainly traced, and the remains of bricks and mortar are to be seen marking where once a whole row of houses stood : a sign of many histories that have left perhaps no other mark save this set among the sand, and seen only when for a little while the sea

uncovers the vanished shore. All the houses standing now are built on shingle, and each one has as good a chance as the rest of being swept away. The winter visitor is always told this, and the remark seems more prophetic than cheerful as he listens to the loud voice of the March wind and the roar with which the sea responds.

The storms raged last March with a fury unusual even for the east coast. "It is no end of a sea in the winter," a schoolboy who knew it well once remarked to the writer, "so part of it drops in occasionally to say how do you do, and then goes and prospects round the town a bit." And this was a much more literal statement than it might have been imagined. A coastguard, or a boatman, or some other local personage knocked at the doors of the houses facing the sea on the night of the great storm. "There's a big sea coming up soon," he said, "you had better be boarded up a bit." So the houses were boarded up a bit. The street door was planked over, every chink was filled, and there was a time of anxious waiting.

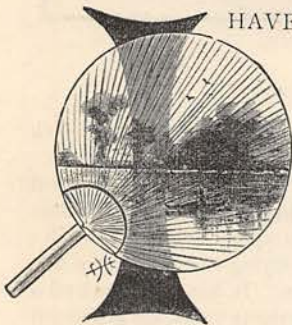
But soon enough and sure enough the waves came, nearer and nearer, and louder and louder, over and over the last bit of beach, over the narrow esplanade, and in no time they were dashing against the street doors; then, as if angry at gaining no admittance, spread past the houses and down the narrow streets behind. But the back doors had been planked over too, and the houses were all boarded up and fortified with earth and sawdust and planks, and looked as though they had made ready for a battle, as indeed they had. And still the sea fled on, until the narrow streets were flowing, and not a soul could anywhere be seen, or any sound be heard

save the raging of the storm. And still in front the sea roared and rushed and foamed, and lower down the beach it spent its fury on some poor fishers' cottages, sweeping them away and leaving literally nothing but the walls to show where but an hour before had been some simple homes of simple folk. The men were about till the last moment doing the best they could, leaving their women and children in-doors, thinking perhaps that the simple lives within would act as a charm against the fury without, or hoping that the merciless sea would be merciful. The hope, if they had it, was vain enough, and mothers and children were rescued from the top windows by means of boats, just in time to look back and see all they had possessed swept into the storm. They were not wholly surprised or wholly cast down. "It was bad enough when the herring harvest failed," one man said quietly without either excitement or dismay in his voice, "but that was no bad luck at all compared to this;" he said no more, and he looked as if he thought no more about it.

The people are used to storms, used to seeing a certain number of houses, and even of lives, paid in as toll to the great sea that is the means of helping them to live. It gives them a livelihood, shall it not also take it away if it will? It gives them life, shall it not also sometimes give them death? This seems to be the philosophy of the place. Besides, the winter sleepiness of the people perhaps helps them through their winter sorrows; they take them placidly enough, and placidly help each other to begin the world again. And so the year goes on and the summer comes; and the winter storms—where are they, that they should be remembered?

REMUNERATIVE EMPLOYMENTS FOR GENTLEWOMEN.

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.



HAVE beforetime spoken of the art of engraving on wood (page 434). Up to the present time, I have not heard of the existence of any other school besides the one I mentioned, as established by the City and Guilds of London at 122, Kennington Park Road, S.E. In addition to the small fee charged for instruction, which is only £3 annually, there is the further advantage attached to this school of a Lady Superintendent, who resides in the house in which the class is held, and also of dinner and tea being provided and supplied to students at a fixed tariff. I learn that, through the kindly help of the "Society for Promoting the Employment of Women," those taught at the above-named school have the chance of still further privileges, namely, of working in

an office in Chancery Lane, under the supervision of an adept; there they have the great advantage of gaining an insight and experience in the requirements of the business, such as could not be gained in any school. This privilege gives the engravers an opportunity of obtaining remunerative work as soon as they have acquired sufficient rapidity of execution. A natural artistic faculty is required to insure rapid progress, as well as a knowledge of drawing; but, as I pointed out beforetime, a commensurate remuneration is sure to be reaped by those who possess talent and industry; and, for the encouragement of those who are soon daunted, I would further point out that the highest order of talent is not essential for engraving, whether on wood or stone.

Allied to the art of wood-engraving is that of Lithography. To those uninitiated in these two crafts, I may say that engraving on wood gives its results from the projecting surface of the block, or those parts not cut away by the engraver, while on the other hand the lithographic process is that of tracing letters or designs,