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LIFE AT LONG BRANCH
By OLIVE LOGAN.



OCEAN AVENUE AFTER ARRIVAL OF EVENING TRAIN.

LONG BRANCH is like the lady's foot of *Punch's* shoe-maker—remarkably long and narrer. The fashionable watering-place reaches from Financier Jay Gould's cottage on the north to President Grant's cottage on the south, a distance of two or three miles, and somewhat suggests a carpenter's set scene at the theatre; it is painted on a straight piece of canvas: what is behind it, the audience neither knows nor cares. Those who have taken the trouble to look behind the scenes at Long Branch—a proportion of the great public which bears about the same relation to the mass that the actors, scene-shifters, and other employés of a theatre do to the public in the auditorium—are aware that there is a little New Jersey village back there, with some

pretty farms and parks, a race-track, and a few such trifles. But the crowds which come and go in the season, on pleasure bent, do not for the most part take cognizance of any thing but the gay scene along the shore, with its straggling hotels and abundance of piazza looking ever out to sea. The popular drive is along the beach road called Ocean Avenue, which is the main artery, the Broadway, the Boulevard, of the "summer capital." It has been a newspaper fashion lately to call Long Branch the American Brighton, but a Brighton it certainly is not, and will never be until the barn-like frame buildings which serve it as hotels are pulled down and others are erected of a material more solid, substantial, and imposing. It is these sprawling wooden

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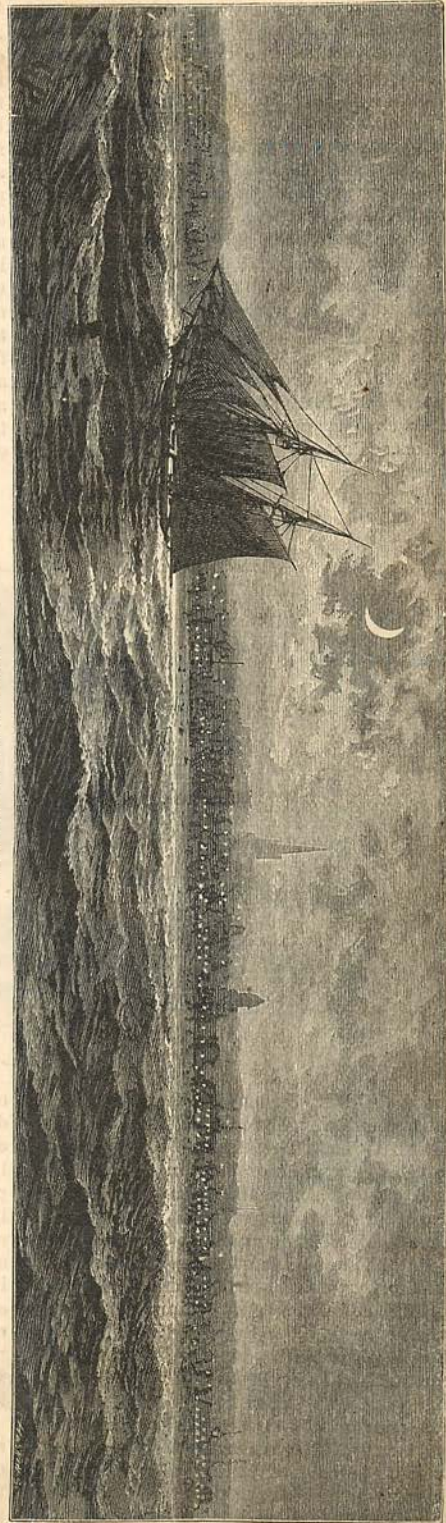
branch that
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 and there side-show-
 s of pop and ginger-
 with air-guns at striped
 canvas sides in the breeze
 ing sea—indeed, the whole
 istibly suggestive of sawdust
 , and one looks about instinctive-
 e red-lipped clown, and listens for
 ery "Houp la!" of the riders. The
 s and the flags and the fast-flying
 orses are no doubt intended by the inn-
 keepers, who principally plan and shape
 the manners and customs here, to awaken
 a mad feeling of hilarity in the bosom of
 the arriving guest; but they are destruc-
 tive to the sentiment of quiet and elegant
 repose which should no doubt inspire the
 existence of an altogether high-toned sum-
 mer resort.

Long Branch is *sui generis*; and it is per-
 haps better in accord with the spirit of
 American institutions than any other of
 our watering-places. It is more republican
 than either Newport or Coney Island, be-
 cause within its bounds the extremes of our
 life meet more freely. It is not so aristo-
 cratic as Newport, yet the President of the
 United States lives there, and so do many
 other prominent examples of our political,
 literary, artistic, commercial, and social life.
 It is not so democratic as Coney Island, yet
 the poorer and more ignorant classes are
 largely represented throughout the season.
 On hot Sundays there come to Long Branch
 great throngs of cheap excursionists, small
 tradesmen and artisans with their families,
 with a sprinkling of roughs and sharpers—
 just such throngs as also go to Coney Island
 on the same day. Long Branch has equal
 attractions for rich and poor. It is quite
 astonishing with what ease the millionaire
 can get rid of dollars there, and it is almost
 equally astonishing what cheap and com-
 fortable quarters are at the command of
 the humblest purses. The same magnifi-

cent sea view which is put so heavily in
 the bill of the lodger on the first floor of
 the big hotels can be enjoyed by the poorer
 lodger near the roof of the cheaper houses
 at a comparatively insignificant cost. If
 there are great taverns where one pays four
 or five dollars a day, with huge extras for
 special rooms and luxuries, there are also
 cheap hotels and even German *Gasthausen*
 where poorer folk can live. If there are el-
 egant cottages for Presidents and merchant
 princes and railway kings, there are also
 abundant boarding-houses for people who
 count their pennies carefully before spend-
 ing them. Some of the most crushing dan-
 dies who loaf in the parlor door at the
 fashionable hotels when the Saturday night
 "hop" is on, faultless in attire and killingly
 eyeglassed and mustached, might be traced
 to humble abodes in the back region be-
 hind the theatrical scene when they saun-
 ter homeward in the hour approaching mid-
 night. They sometimes condescend to join
 the dancers on the floor, and they bathe at
 the fashionable hour with great assiduity,
 but where they eat and sleep can only be
 conjectured. They are just as well-bred,
 well-mannered, and well-appearing gentle-
 men as any at Long Branch, and are just
 as well received by what is there called so-
 ciety.

Long Branch further illustrates a side of
 American character in the fact that it is a
 direct result of business energy, enterprise,
 shrewdness, and "push." It did not grow
 up slowly, year by year, an outcome of the
 natural fitness of things, as Brighton did,
 and as Dieppe and Trouville did—nay, as
 Newport and Saratoga did. As things go in
 this country, Newport and Saratoga are old.
 They figured in the Revolutionary period,
 and were even known as watering-places
 as far back as 1800—further, perhaps. But
 Long Branch is as striking an example of
 rapid growth in its way as Chicago itself
 is. Twenty years ago it had no fashionable
 existence, which is only saying it had no
 existence at all. There was nothing there
 but a lonely stretch of sandy shore, against
 which the surf beat unhonored and unsung.
 If the slow-going villager back under the
 trees there, a mile from the beach, had been
 told that Long Branch was the future great
 marine suburb of the great metropolis, he
 would no doubt have smiled incredulous.
 And even now one seeks in vain for the rea-
 son why this particular spot was chosen for
 this purpose, until his seeking brings him
 to the simple truth that certain speculators
 willed it so, and set about making their
 scheme a reality by those methods which
 are so well known to the builders of paper
 cities in this country. They willed that the
 tide of New York's summer-resort seekers
 should pass by the charming Highlands of
 the Navesink, which now blink dully at the

long whizzing trains flitting past them five or six times a day, loaded down with merry throngs all the summer through. Along the road from Sandy Hook to Long Branch lie beautiful little villages which have their yearly throng of summer patrons, but they are not "the Branch," and their strongest recommendation as watering-places is that they are within easy driving distance of the summer capital. The glory and gain of transforming Long Branch from a deserted stretch of New Jersey coast into the sea-side city of to-day, and of familiarizing its name to the popular ear to such an extent that Chicago itself is not more celebrated, undoubtedly rest with a few capitalists, who bought farms in Monmouth County for thirty or forty dollars an acre, and set about turning their corn fields into villa plots. Easy enough to do this much on paper, but to make the public buy the plots was something calling for ability and energy of the first order. A scheme of advertising was adopted, brave, expensive, and perilous, by which the place was persistently brought before the public attention summer after summer. The ubiquitous correspondent of the daily press was sent down to report. It was not a very fascinating spot in those early days, but the reporter who can not write an attractive letter merely because there is nothing attractive to write about has mistaken his vocation. A vivid imagination, a touch of Thackeray's wit and Dickens's inventive genius, are much more valuable in a watering-place, correspondent than the mere photographic faculty of reproducing facts. To "call a spade a spade" is fatal to the charm of letters from the sea-side, especially if the place be dull and uninteresting. There were as charming letters written from Long Branch when it was dull and uninviting as now when it is animated and attractive in the season. By one device and another, legitimate and illegitimate, by building a new railroad, by improvements of various sorts, and divers plans for attracting public attention to their pet and pride, the capitalists forced the growth of the place in public appreciation, and achieved a veritable *coup d'état* when they induced President Grant to go and live there in the summer. Long Branch became the summer capital, and its fortune was made. The villa plots sold like the proverbial hot cakes. The hotels built huge additions to themselves, and all the world rushed to sleep in them. Those who had money in their pockets found it burning most uncomfortably there until they had bought a villa plot, or a corner of a farm, or an old house

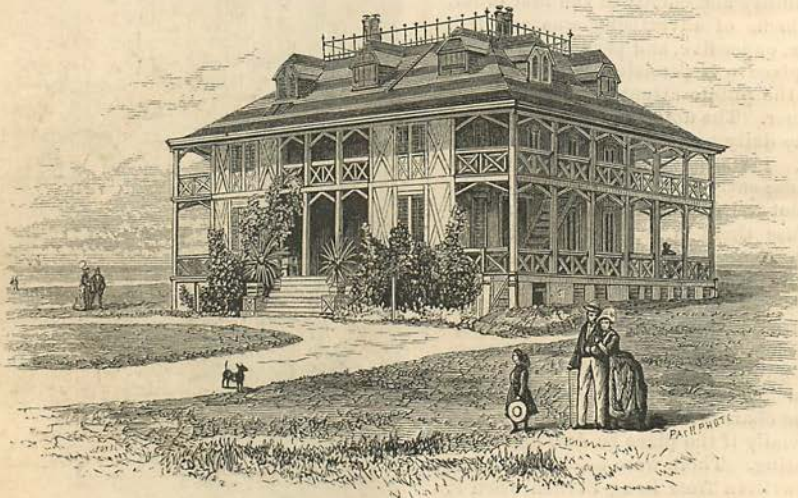


LONG BRANCH, FROM THE SEA.

that could be turned into a summer seat. Many outsiders made large sums by buying this week to sell the next at an enormous advance. Lots that one summer sold for \$500 were held the following summer at \$5000. Every body was elated, excited; there was Champagne in the air; and life was gay and fascinating to residents as to the going and coming crowd. The summer capital was a success.

There have been unfavorable comments made upon the President's course in accepting his handsome cottage by the sea, and for living in it a portion of his time in summer; but the American public must always have something it can scold its Presidents for, and I do not suppose General Grant slept less soundly, lulled by the murmur of the waves upon the beach, because of his critics. Probably Presidents get used to

between Washington and Long Branch. And although axe-grinders no doubt followed even Jefferson to his sky-perched retreat, it need hardly be said that he was, while there, far less capable of attending to the business of the government than Grant is in his sea-side home. It is a lovely home; and when the President sits on his back piazza of a summer evening to smoke his after-dinner cigar, with his gentle and amiable wife and his comely children about him, it is a sight which no lover of his country need feel uneasy at seeing. At such a time, doors and windows all wide open, and the interior furnishing glimpses of a comfortable but not showy home, with pictures and books about and lamps burning, perhaps a group of carriages will come rolling down the road from the hotel region, and a crowd of friends and fellow-citizens, with a band



PRESIDENT GRANT'S COTTAGE.

being scolded. From Washington's time to the present, they have all had a goodly share of the thing. The city of Washington is not the healthiest or pleasantest of abodes during the fierce heats of July and August, and others than our present Chief Magistrate have avoided it as much as duty would allow. Thomas Jefferson spent some months of each year at his remote home of Monticello, on top of a woody Virginian hill, while he was occupying the Presidential office; and Monticello in his day was further from Washington than Long Branch is in this Centennial year. The rumbling old gig in which Jefferson trundled to and fro between Washington and Charlottesville did not accomplish its journey of a hundred and odd miles in as little time as the palace-car now takes to pass over the two hundred and odd miles

of music, will invade the lawn. Then the dulcet strains of a serenade will rise on the evening air, and the family group will sit listening, to break into a little ripple of applause now and then, and Mrs. Grant, leaning over the piazza railing, will chat familiarly with whomsoever chances to be standing near, and press her visitors to come in. "Do come in," I once heard her say on such an occasion; "we can give you a cracker at least in our little cot." Simple, unpretentious, and kindly, a scene like this is worthy to live in the records of our republican land, a type of its best spirit.

In the vicinity of President Grant's home are the cottages of a number of people more or less known to fame. Conspicuous among these are several members of the theatrical profession—a class of people usually clan-

nish, and avoiding familiarity with the world outside its own ranks. The time has gone by when the members of this profession were classed with the Ishmaelites and Bohemians of society, and those who have been so fortunate as to penetrate to the friendly acquaintanceship of the actors in their homes at Long Branch have found the domestic altar as charmingly surrounded as in any homes in the land. The cottages and hotels at Long Branch are built very much alike in essential details—that is to say, as much like “all out-doors” as possible—with abundance of piazza stretching on every side, and often on every story; with large windows, wide halls, and airy rooms. The cottages occupied by the dramatic fraternity present no features differing from others, unless it be a superiority in the matter of interior adornment.

Their luxury in this respect is, indeed, in several cases very striking, the reason for it being partly, perhaps, that the players have no town homes, as a rule, their winters being mostly passed in traveling, and dwelling in hotels. So their summer homes, to which they hie for rest as soon as their “season” of active labor is over, become in a peculiar sense dear to them. One of the most conspicuous examples of the luxury of these homes is furnished in the cottage owned and occupied by Maggie Mitchell, “The Cricket.” She

owns a number of cottages and farms at Long Branch; the one in which she dwells was built by Edwin Booth, and in its large parlor he was married. It is profusely ornamented within with paintings, statuary, *objets d'art*, rare and costly volumes, and especially with quaint and beautiful articles of Japanese manufacture. Among her books is one of the three copies of Boydell's 1793 edition of Shakspeare—a huge volume containing a hundred steel plates, and valued at several hundred dollars. A striking picture of an English village, with a crowded mass of picturesque houses, an ivy-hung church, an antique bridge, and a crumbling castle, is Knaresborough, in Yorkshire, where the actress's mother was born. All the evidences of an affectionate domestic spirit are abun-

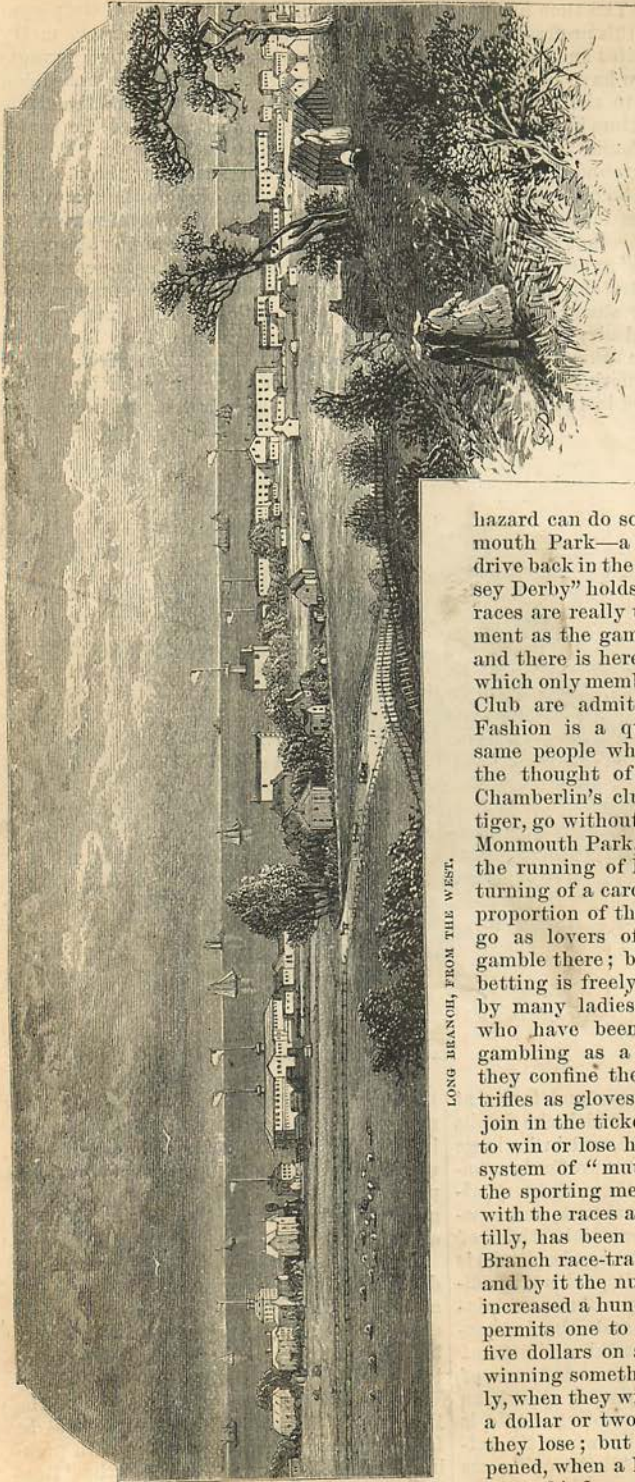
dant in this little artist's abode; and the same is true of the other homes of the player folk at Long Branch. Children make merry in their roomy halls; gray-haired parents sit at the hospitable board; the house-dog barks and the chickens cluck and the cattle low about these homes as about the homes of other good and gentle people. For the most part they are somewhat remote from the gay scene which looks on the sea, where Pleasure holds her court in hotel parlors, on the lawns where the brass-bands blare, and up and down the drive. The players rather favor a quieter mode of life in summer than that which is popular with the majority of visitors to Long Branch. They like to be near it, but they are seldom of it. Their time is passed in home hospitalities, in the entertainment of their friends, in reading



MAGGIE MITCHELL'S COTTAGE.

the long summer hours away on their piazzas or lolling in tree-sprung hammocks, and in driving about the country in cozy family carriages, rather than in the feverish atmosphere of fashionable ball-rooms, the daily gambol in the surf, or the exciting delights of the gaming table.

A flavor of Baden-Baden, as it was in the days before gambling was prohibited, is furnished at Long Branch by Chamberlin's club-house, an elegant “cottage”—for every building is a cottage here, unless it is a hotel—situated within a stone's-throw of the West End Hotel, and within sight of the President's home. (The “West End” at Long Branch, it may be explained in passing, is, in fact, the south end, and the “East End” is the north end, so complacently does



LONG BRANCH, FROM THE WEST.

fashion ignore points of the compass in its nomenclature.) In the club-house there are tables for roulette, *rouge et noir*, and other games of chance, and I am told the scene late at night, when the place is thronged with Wall Street men and other skillful skirmishers with the goddess of luck, is a very brilliant one; but unlike the gaming *salons* of Baden-Baden, the gentler sex do not mingle in the scene at Chamberlin's. Those ladies who wish to indulge their passion for

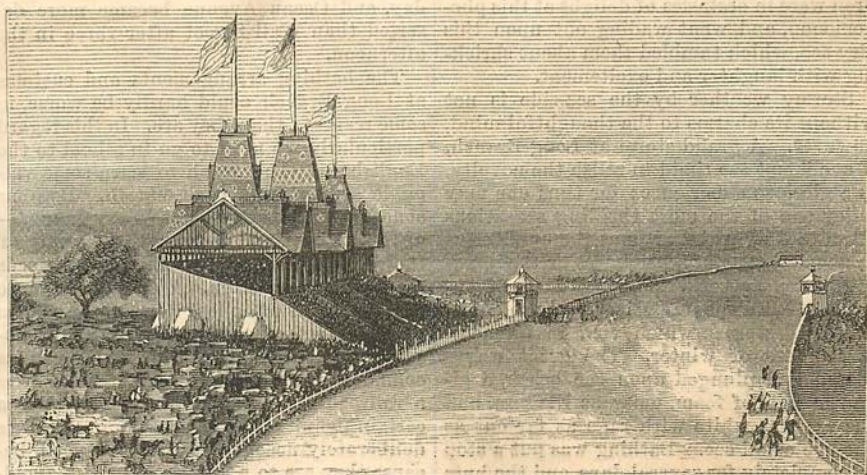
winning or losing at hazard can do so on stated days at Monmouth Park—a racing ground a short drive back in the country, where the “Jersey Derby” holds its “meetings.” These races are really under the same management as the gaming tables on the shore, and there is here also a “club-house,” to which only members of the Jersey Jockey Club are admitted, with their friends. Fashion is a queer moralist; and the same people who would be horrified at the thought of joining the throng in Chamberlin's club-house to toy with its tiger, go without a qualm to the races at Monmouth Park, and bet their money on the running of horses instead of on the turning of a card. It is true that a large proportion of those who go to the races go as lovers of horseflesh, and never gamble there; but it is equally true that betting is freely and openly indulged in by many ladies as well as gentlemen, who have been taught to look upon gambling as a terrible vice. Nor do they confine themselves to betting such trifles as gloves and *bonbons*, but boldly join in the ticket buying of the “pools,” to win or lose hundreds of dollars. The system of “mutual” pools, invented by the sporting men of Paris in connection with the races at Longchamps and Chantilly, has been introduced at the Long Branch race-track within a year or two, and by it the number of bettors has been increased a hundredfold; for this system permits one to stake as small a sum as five dollars on a race, with a chance of winning something handsome. Generally, when they win, they win but a trifle—a dollar or two or three—and generally they lose; but occasionally it has happened, when a horse that almost nobody trusted in has miraculously won the race,

that the investor of a five-dollar bill in a "mutual" pool has won two or three hundred dollars. It is easy to see what temptation these possible prizes offer, and how enormously this system must increase the number of bettors.

As a spectacle of our democratic American tricks and manners, a visit to Monmouth Park on a race-day is, no doubt, instructive to the foreigner who visits Long Branch. It is not so gay a scene, either on the road or at the track, as that which one views who goes to the English Derby at Epsom, where the road is thronged with thousands and thousands of equipages of every conceivable variety, and the ~~grounds~~ are crowded with people, among whom negro minstrels bang their tambourines, and jugglers juggle, and gymnasts tumble, and fortune-tellers and thimble-riggers drive their trade. But it must be a novelty to an Englishman

in grain or real estate. There are on the grounds no sports, shows, or incidental diversions; no loud talking, no quarreling; very little tipsiness; and there are long years, eternities, of inane dullness between the "heats," in which one is nearly consumed with *ennui*. All this is characteristically American.

The season of Long Branch is supposed to open about the 15th of June, and to close about the 15th of September—at least this is the period fixed by the hotel-keepers, who would, however, willingly extend it. But the fact is, the weather regulates the matter, and it has happened that Long Branch has been less full in the middle of July than it was at a far earlier period in the summer. A cold wind may come blowing out of the sea in the midst of a "heated term," and send the crowd of pleasure-seekers skurrying away to their homes inland



MONMOUTH RACE-COURSE.

to see elegantly dressed ladies complacently trundling to the races in a common hotel omnibus—fare, twenty-five cents. There are many fine turn-outs on the road, to be sure, but a man worth a million is capable, at Long Branch, of bundling his wife and daughters into the omnibus at his hotel door, in case of no other conveyance conveniently offering, and it is not considered a matter for special remark. It is noticeable, too, that the American generally goes to the races in a grave and sedate manner—he might be going to a Methodist camp-meeting so far as hilarity indicates his destination. There is none of that wild chaffing and outlandish prankishness which make the road to the Epsom Derby one continuous raree-show. On the ground he walks about decorously with his hands in his pockets; he buys at the pools with the serious air of a man investing his money

like so many flies, while those who remain huddle together in their bedrooms, or sit about in the least airy corners of parlor and hall, wrapped in warm shawls. The long cool piazzas which furnish such a delightful lounge when Sol smites saucily at noonday, or on a warm moon-lit night, are then deserted. In the ocean gale the frame hotels quiver and rattle and shed clapboards in the most surprising way, and whispers of doubt and fear pass from lip to lip as to the likelihood of a roof being sent flying inland or of windows tumbling into the room. A sudden storm came up one day last summer which played queer pranks in the parlor of the Ocean House. This parlor is used for dancing, and its carpet is covered over with a linen cloth; the furniture is of willow; and though the servants made all haste to close the windows and fasten the blinds, the wind swept in under the dancing cloth



STORM AT LONG BR.

and blew it up like a huge bladder, upon which tables and chairs rode high in air, like little ships upon a rolling sea. Children were in ecstasies of delight at this phenomenon, and went wading out upon this airy sea, which tumbled them about shrieking with laughter and excitement.

Stormy weather by the sea-side is not without its charms to the thoughtful mind, however. A grand storm at Long Branch, if one is not too timid to relish the novelty, is a glorious experience; for thus one may enjoy one of the most thrilling sensations of an ocean voyage without the unpleasant accompaniment of seasickness or the possibility of shipwreck. The first week of August, 1875, was characterized by a prolonged series of storms, which vied in intensity with those of winter. The great waves roared and plunged upon the beach, a gigantic wall of foam, noisy as Niagara, and the sea was white with rage as far out as the eye could see. Bathing was put a stop to completely for several days, and the huts on the sands were so drenched with water that they were hardly dry again that season, but set one to sneezing whenever they were ventured into for disrobing purposes. Many of them were washed away; and after the storm was over, the shore was strewn for miles with strange objects, *débris* of shipwrecked craft, great piles of the slimy vegetation of the sea, dead fish and animals. What wild tragedies were enacted out upon the bosom of the broad ocean, amidst the warring of the elements, with thunder and lightning more terrific than that which took place on the blasted heath where Macbeth met the witches, who could tell? But it set us thinking to walk on the beach that Sunday morning after the long storm, and view the snapped masts, broken spars, baskets, boxes, and other *disjecta membra* of foundered craft—among them a defunct camel, water-swollen and hideous.

The stormy weather furnished grand sea sights for those who staid at the Branch;

but it was as bad as an epidemic for the hotel-keepers. The "season" took a disheartening nap right in its natural noonday, and Ocean Avenue became more deserted than Wall Street after three in the afternoon.

The bathing arrangements and customs at Long Branch could hardly be worse, in some respects, than they are. In this regard particularly we need to go to school to the English and the French to learn some valuable lessons from each nation. Both as concerns the comfort—not to say luxury—of the bathers, and as regards the safety of their lives, the beach at Long Branch needs thorough reformation. I do not mean to say that life is often lost there, for it seldom is; but it sometimes is, and it is a wild absurdity that this should ever be. When we commit ourselves to an ocean steamer or to a railroad train, we know that there is a certain definite danger in so doing, and we deliberately accept the risk and peril, because they are to a certain extent unavoidable. Those who go down to the sea in ships do so in spite of the fact that innumerable lives have been lost at sea, and put their trust in Providence; but those who go down to the sea to bathe, in the heart of a populous community whose very existence is based on the idea that people shall bathe in the sea, ought not to feel that there is one iota more danger in the surf than in a bath-tub under a roof. Yet not a summer passes but a life or two is lost at Long Branch, which need not have been lost if the precautions used at European watering-places were practiced here.

At the opening of the summer season the shore in front of each hotel at Long Branch is taken possession of by certain men of semi-seafaring appearance, who proceed to set up on the sands, just under the bluff, rows of bathing huts of an architecture so contemptible that even Uncle Tom and Topsy would have turned up their noses at them—shanties, of course, weather-browned boards,

unpainted and often even unplanned, rudely nailed together, sides and roof of the same material, as incapable of keeping out wind and rain as so many paper boxes. The same men also set up a shanty of a larger sort, with a roof that is water-tight, which they occupy in company with piles of faded woollen garments which they facetiously denominate "bathing dresses," and which they still more facetiously let to ladies and gentlemen throughout the summer at the rate of half a dollar for each bath. I suppose these men do not really look upon this transaction in the light of being the huge joke it is, but it certainly would not surprise me to learn that a beginner at the business was tortured with mad longings to rush behind the shanty and relieve his pent-up risibles in writhings of laughter after each successive letting of a damp woollen shirt and trowsers tied with a string as a "bathing dress" to a gentleman in the ordinary attire of civilization. Those who pass any considerable time at the Branch, and bathe with regularity, of course provide themselves with bathing suits of their own; but transient visitors do not find it convenient to do this; and how greatly in demand the garments of the bath-keepers are, is shown by the fact that they are often furnished damp and clammy to the new-comer, having had no time to dry since their last tenant paid for their occupancy. If the Witch of Endor had presided at the construction of these miraculous bathing suits, they could scarcely be

more ugly and fantastic than they are. That so many Americans are to be found who are willing to put them on, and walk unflinchingly across the stretch of sand between disrobing hut and surf, under the fire of hundreds of glances from the ladies and gentlemen present, is proof that the bravery of the nation should not be lightly impugned. True, they have their reward when the kind ocean covers them with her modest mantle of cool waves. There is no heroism without some guerdon.

Bathing dresses less shabby, and which are scrupulously dried between lettings, to be leased for a sum less absurdly close to their net value, are one item of the reform which is imperatively demanded at Long Branch. If the semi-seafaring Jersey men who "farm out" these garments can not make a large enough profit—or think they can not—without continuing the existing reproach, the hotel-keepers should take the matter in their own hands. It would certainly be found a wise policy to make the surf bathing a more attractive feature of life at Long Branch than it now is. More people would bathe, and as a consequence—for surf bathing is a passion which grows with indulgence—more people would stay at the hotels, instead of hurrying away, bored, unamused, half disgusted, by the wretched customs of the beach. The very scene would be more attractive to those people—always in considerable force at Long Branch—who do not care to bathe, but like to see the bathers



THE BATHING HOUR.

at their frolics. It is a mistake to think that the spectators derive any considerable amusement from the shabby and wretched aspect presented by a bather in an ugly suit. But a group of bathers, such as may sometimes be seen at a French watering-place, where the suits are varied in color and pattern, and fit neatly, is a sight so picturesque that one does not tire of it. There is no good reason why gentlemen who are well dressed in the city should look like scrubbed chimney-sweeps on the bath-ground; nor why ladies should not display coquetry in bath dresses as well as in ball dresses. The idea that a handsome bathing suit "attracts attention" is absurd; nothing attracts so much attention, nor attracts it so unpleasantly, as an ugly and unbecoming bath dress. French ladies realize this, and dress accordingly, selecting their bathing outfit

There was one tall athlete seen on the sands for a few days last summer who wore while bathing the veritable "togs" of a professional gymnast—hauberk and foot-pieces, tights and trunks. He was really a trapeze performer at a variety show somewhere back in the village, I was told, and so was no true part of the fashionable throng; but he helped to make it picturesque, and his departure left a sombre void.

Another imperative need of the bathers at Long Branch is the hot-water foot-bath, to equalize the circulation after the surf bath is over. This, also, is a feature of French watering-places which we might copy to advantage. So is the provision of better bath-houses. But this, perhaps, is too much to expect; and, after all, it is a minor matter. Not so, however, the matter of safety for the bathers while in the water.



THE PRESIDENT'S TURN-OUT.

as carefully, with respect to becomingness in color and cut, freshness and fit, as any dress they wear. It is a delicate rose flannel, with pleatings of white; hat trimmed in accordance; pink hose and straw shoes; or it is a navy blue serge, with stripes of yellow, or of white, or of brown merino, or some other tasteful combination. At Long Branch it is almost always a coarse dark flannel, much too large, and crowned with a rough straw hat more fit for a gutter than for a lady's wear. And as for the gentlemen! Ye heathen deities! what scarecrows they usually are! Description could do them no justice. Yet once in a while a handsome or a picturesque costume may be observed among them—a tight-fitting blue *gilet de laine*, with a white star on the breast, or a loose sailor's shirt and trowsers handsomely braided.

The semi-seafaring Jersey men who lease the bathing dresses are the only guardians of the beach. Sometimes they are two in number; at the larger hotels, three; but they ought to be a dozen. They loiter on the sands—when not otherwise occupied with their tenancy work—and keep a good-natured eye upon the bathers, ready to go in and help should there be a cry for help. But it is easy to see that when their presence is most needed, when the bathers are most numerous, why, precisely then their garment-letting trade is liveliest, and absorbs all their attention. There should be men to guard the beach, like watchmen, at all hours, with no other duty than to dissuade persons from bathing at unsafe conditions of the tide, and watching those who do bathe, assiduously and unceasingly. Life-



OCEAN GROVE.

to the surf no more trying than another. Certainly, in the matter of modesty, there is no special offense to be taken herein, for the simple reason that custom rules in this as in all things. The innocent Irish maiden who shows her bare legs to the knee is certainly as modest as the society lady who bares her shoulders in the glare of a gas-lit parlor. In fact, neither is immodest, for she is merely doing what custom ordains in her sphere of life. So the lady who would not show her boot-top in a ball-room (though she would freely accept the close embrace of the waltz) will walk on the sands in a Bloomer costume

with knee-reaching Turkish trowsers, and propriety is not offended, for custom rules. Probably the English bathing-machines are not altogether feasible on our softer sands and in our rougher surf.

boats should be constantly plying. This is done in France, and it can be done here. The only protection our bathers have is a rope fastened to stakes on shore and in the water—a great convenience certainly, but puerile indeed when viewed as a measure of safety. When the surf is strong, the rope becomes useless to women and children, whose hands are torn violently from it by the power of the waves.

The Centennial visitor to Long Branch, if he be the brave reformer we hope he is, should insist on clean and dry bath dresses, hot foot-baths, and protection from the dangers of drowning. The futility of having lived a hundred years, if we can not yet cope with the effete despotisms of Europe in such a matter as this, is apparent.

The bathing-machines of Brighton are an institution which it would be agreeable, to the softer sex at least, to have at Long Branch. The long walk across the sands from the disrobing huts to the water's edge is a painful ordeal to many ladies, especially those who do not bathe often. Use breeds ease, and ladies who have dwelt summer after summer at Long Branch, bathing regularly throughout the season, find the walk down

generally in the earlier half of the day, but occasionally it falls in the afternoon. It is regulated, of course, by the tide; when the tide is lowest, bathing is safest. The signal to hotel and cottage people is a white flag, which is seen flying from a short staff at the head of the wooden staircase that leads from the grassy summit of the bluff down to the sands. Each of the great hotels includes in its grounds a strip of beach, as do those cottages which look on Ocean Avenue. There is nothing exclusive about any of the hotel bathing grounds. Ostensibly for the "guests" of the hotel, they are actually open to any one who chooses to avail himself of their limited conveniences. When the white flag is seen flying, there begins a general hegira of men, women, and children, who go streaming down to the beach in crowds, some to bathe, some to look on. The scene when the day is fair and the bathing good, the water mild in temperature and the surf rolling gently in with a long shallow stretch, is a very animated one. From a central point, like that of the Ocean Hotel grounds, one may look up and down the beach for miles, witnessing schools of bathers at frequent intervals throughout the entire distance.

Some days one may see two or three thousand bathers in the water at once, making the air vocal with shouts and laughter, the nervous shrieks of the timid and the boisterous merriment of the brave. The sexes mingle freely in the pastime, and it is no uncommon experience for the belles and beaux of the ball-room to make appointments between the figures in the Lancers for the next day's bath.

The morning being usually devoted to the bath, the afternoon is set apart for excursions and drives. The drives we have always with us; the occasions for excursions are afforded from time to time variously. In general terms they may be specified in three divisions: first, excursions to Pleasure Bay; second, excursions to Monmouth Park; third, excursions to Ocean Grove. Those to Pleasure Bay may be subdivided into ordinary and extraordinary, the ordinary being that which is available on any pleasant day throughout the season, the extraordinary that which is warranted by the announcement of some special festivity at Pleasure Bay, such as a clam-bake or a regatta. You are liable to meet the most important people at the Branch at these festivities. The President himself, who never goes to the races, has at times deigned to attend a clam-bake. Pleasure Bay is a charming drive, from the centre of gayety at the Branch, just a mile and a half, through a lovely open country, to an old-fashioned

original New Jersey tavern, in the midst of a green grove on the bank of a placid sheet of water. There is a flavor of combined Bohemianism and rustic simplicity about the place which contrasts delightfully with the ostentation and luxury of the sea-side hotel where you are staying; and it is but a carping critic who would discuss, while enjoying the cheap delights of the Old Pleasure Bay House, whether the landlord maintains its primitive simplicity out of a sentimental, poetic love of nature, or merely because (as some assert) he is too stingy to spend any of his profits in modern improvements. Be this as it may, it is pleasant to sit at the weather-beaten tables under the green trees and eat his crabs, and then go and catch some. It makes you think of Squeers and his class in "bottiney;" first they spell it, and then they go and do it. A fairy-like yacht with spreading sail receives you at the water's edge, and you are blown over to the opposite shore, where, with a chunk of fish on the end of a string, and a net at the end of a pole, you find that catching crabs is as easy as eating them. The sail gives you a glorious appetite, and if there is a clam-bake when you return, you will proceed to eat ravenously of a conglomeration of green corn, clams, crabs, potatoes, and yellow-legged chickens that would make Delmonico's head cook turn green with horror merely to smell of it; taste such a savage mess I am sure he never would—no, not if



SERVICES ON THE BEACH, OCEAN GROVE.

thumb-screws and red-hot plowshares were the alternative.

The excursions to Monmouth Park are afforded by the races; of them I have spoken. The excursions to Ocean Grove, like those to Pleasure Bay, are both for special and general reasons, the special being the camp-meetings which are held there at intervals during the summer. Ocean Grove is a summer city of Methodists, an hour's brisk carriage drive from Long Branch, through a somewhat monotonous country. It is on the sea-shore, and its bathing habits are precisely as those of Long Branch; in most other respects there is a complete dissimilarity. No balls, no billiards, no bars, no late hours, no dissipations of any sort, are permitted at Ocean Grove,

and existence there is carried on inexpensively. It is a sort of poor man's paradise, though there are rich people there; but even the rich dwell in modest cottages, while those who must practice a close economy live in tents or in cheaply constructed cabins in the woods. The place is curious and interesting in many respects, and visitors to Long Branch do not feel that they have seen all the "lions" until they have driven down to Ocean Grove. The gates of the community are closed at an early hour in the evening and on Sundays; but as one side of the Grove is not fenced in, but looks on a pretty sheet of water, visitors to the Sunday camp-meeting quit their carriages on the shore of the little lake, and are smuggled over—not very surreptitiously—in row-boats for a one-cent fare. The meetings are sometimes held on the sea-shore, right down where the surf makes music in harmony with the human chorus, and sometimes under the trees in the grove.

The amusements of the evening at Long Branch are varied: not to speak of such favorite diversions as lovers' strolls in moon-



LOVERS' STROLLS BY MOONLIGHT.

light or starlight on the beach, there are dancing parties every evening in the parlors of all the large hotels, with occasional concerts, dramatic entertainments, etc., usually given by amateurs and for some charitable object. Occasionally, too, a circus comes along and pitches its tent on the vacant lot near the Ocean Hotel, and, strange as it may seem to those who know not the ways of the fashionable world, the circus is packed full, not with the Jersey men from the back village merely, but with the leaders of the *monde* at Long Branch. The favorite night for dancing is Saturday; custom has made this the most brilliant night in the week in the parlors of the hotels; more people arrive on Saturday than on any other day, and in the height of the season on a Saturday night the piazzas will be so thronged that it is almost impossible to move about, thousands of men and women in gala attire sitting by the open windows to listen to the music and see the dancers. They have the best of it too, for dancing in midsummer ball-rooms is hot work, and the sterner sex invariably maintain that they

thus make martyrs of themselves only to please the fair. Dancing is always concluded at half past ten, except on Saturday nights, when it is sometimes prolonged till the stroke of twelve. On Sunday nights, at some of the hotels, an instrumental concert—called "sacred" by courtesy—is given on the balcony, the piano being wheeled out there for the occasion. On other nights, after the dance is over, parties will sometimes be made up to go and serenade the President, or some other person of consequence, or lady of social popularity. Groups go strolling on the grassy bluff, or gather in some favorite nook to sing hilarious songs, with wine and wit and spirits bent on driving dull care away.

Beyond all question, the most delightful time of the year at Long Branch, but not

er than even in the hottest of the dog-days—though it will sometimes lie for days together like a mirror, it is not a mirror which flashes back dazzling sunbeams, but absorbs them, and the eye is rested. Then the lapping waves woo the shore so gently and playfully that bathing therein is an Oriental luxury not to be resisted. The atmosphere is so sweet and pure you can almost taste it, and the waters, warmed by the long heats of summer, are as balmy as the air. When the tide is low, there lie exposed such long reaches of shallow bathing ground as the bathers of the midsummer would hardly believe possible. On the same spot of shore where, in July, the surf buffeted strong men in its giant arms as pigmies, and tossed them, panting with exhaustion, on the hot sands, now, in September, they might wade out half



WESLEY LAKE, OCEAN GROVE.

the most fashionable, is the autumn, when there comes upon the shining face of the sea a soft haze, which is most agreeable to the eye, and the air is full of balmy odors. To many people the sight of the sea with the sunlight beating on it in the bright days of summer is painful and wearisome. "Oh, I can't bear that sea!" cried a poet of my acquaintance, one day, as we stood on the bluff; "it puts my eyes out." On some hot days the great waters will lie almost rippleless, save for a little surfy dog-day frothing at the mouth, all the long hours from morn till dewy eve, glittering like a burnished shield, and flashing in the eyes of the beholder until he is fain to fly. But in the mellow days of autumn this is not so. Though the ocean then grows smooth-

a mile from shore before they would meet a surf sufficiently strong to knock them off their feet. But in September, when the surf-bathing was like this, there would be no more than three or four lonely bathers in the sea at the hour when formerly there were a hundred. The writer remained at Long Branch last season until near October, and does not speak from hearsay. The hotels were utterly deserted; cows pastured on the lawns in front of them; the windows were nailed up with boards; the bathing huts were torn to pieces, and lay piled, mere every-day lumber, in heaps on the grassy bluff; no carriages rolled up and down the Avenue; no lovers strolled upon the sands; yet the days were simply heavenly, and passed by like dreams of fairy-land. Long

Branch was at its loveliest, but the crowds were gone. Fashion is the jade who has wrought this grievous wrong upon our fellow-men.

The cottage owners at Long Branch do not obey the orders of Fashion so meekly and with such alacrity as the hotel dwellers. After the latter rush away, the former stay—just as long as they can. The President's family stay till October, some few cottagers even till November; and the bravest are the happiest. But there is something about the aspect of those huge deserted hotels that is awfully depressing as the lonely cottager drives down the Avenue at dusk. So brilliant but a week or two ago, with colored lamps flashing on the lawns, and gayly dressed throngs moving in the glare of the chandeliers, a thousand windows lighted, and streams of music issuing in harmony with the sound of voices and laughter from the crowded parlors; and now, utter desolation, barred windows, silence like that of the dead. And the cottager pulls his hat over his eyes, and whips up his nag, eager to reach his cheerful home circle. This sort of thing wears on the stoutest nerves at last, and the panic takes them one by one, and off they go by the first train they can

get. Nature has charms, but to the most of us human nature is the more potent winner. We long for our kind. We love to keep with the crowd. Hence great cities, and hence, also, watering-places.

The cloud of financial depression which has cast its shadow over the whole country for two or three years past has not failed to include Long Branch in its gloom. Property has depreciated in value there as elsewhere, and the grand industry of the place—which is hotel-keeping, I take it—has not thriven as of old. It is quite possible that, unless our next President should choose Long Branch as his summer residence also, many years will elapse before the flow of prosperity will lead to the high prices in real estate which formerly prevailed there. Yet the prediction would be childish which should intimate that the best days of Long Branch are over. The probability is rather that this charming resort will grow more and more in favor; and not only this, but it is likely that other localities by the ocean's brink, easily accessible to the great metropolis, will develop their resources in like manner, and blossom into summer resorts for an overheated city populace year upon year.

THE WAY OF THE WIND.

"Why does the East Wind always complain?—
Because he is married to the Rain."

"Why is the North Wind's breath so strong?—
He has wrestled with icebergs fierce and long."

"Why is the South Wind's step so light?—
Out of a sleeping land in flight."

"Why is the West Wind's touch aflame?—
Out of a sunset cloud he came."

Lying under a summer tree,
This is what Zephyr sang to me.

Zephyr, with flattering words and low,
Tells but half of the truth I know.

Four great boys in an ancient hall,
They grew up thinking their will was all.

Sweet Mother Nature, the dearest dame—
I fear her softness is much to blame—

Lovely and quiet, year out, year in,
Her soft white blankets she sits to spin;

Rose-hued curtains and carpets green,
Broïdered cushions of satin sheen.

Her guests are bidden, her house is fair—
Four wild rovers have entrance there.

Never's an hour so still and sweet
But may be broken by trampling feet;

But when from the ruin they turn away,
Oh, who so gentle and blithe as they!

They rock the cradles in tall tree-tops,
They run with the tripping water-drops;

Daintily courting, they sigh and pine
Round the flower-ladies so pure and fine.

Well they love pleasure, but mischief best—
Too swift and subtle and strong for rest.

Up and down in the world they go,
And mock us with every voice we know.

They pipe to the dreamers at even-song;
They mourn to the watchers all night long.

Then down the chimney they shout and roar,
Shriek at the lattice and shake the door.

The old man, sighing, repeateth still,
"The will o' the wind is boyhood's will;"

The boy, with wondering, silent lips,
Thinks of the sea and the wafted ships;

And each, in his dim heart, longs to find
Out of his world the way o' the wind.