

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

UP THE RIVER.

THE dweller in a "million-peopled city," when summer holidays, for a month or a single day, give him leave to escape from the din of its dusty streets, is apt to feel himself attracted by the charm of moving waters. He longs for the refreshment both to mind and senses that is to be drawn from their constant flow or their tidal fluctuation. It is not the mere physical quality of coolness that he craves, as the lower animals must do, for the relief of a jaded body after the heats of July, reflected from the brick walls and stone pavements of town, and aggravated by the restless presence of a pushing crowd. His spirit desires to consult the healing wisdom of Nature, which has ever ready—would we but seek it and could we but reach it—the proper food and medicine for sickness and soreness of heart in her nursing Man. He would find some material image of the true and wholesome inner life, the rise and rush of free and pure emotion, so rarely experienced in our imperfect condition in this world. In the seeming life of water, in the fountain, the river, or the sea, we are soothed with an outward and visible sign corresponding to the felt need of such natural harmony and sincerity in the movements of thought and feeling.

Most families who can afford the modest luxury are accustomed to take their recreation by the seaside, in the first place, after the fatigues of their business or amusements in town, whether or not they intend an autumn ramble or sojourn amidst the more picturesque scenery of North Britain or Central Europe. But the river, as well as the sea, is a favourite resort of not a few busy men who suffer, as many of us do, from the incessant hourly demands of London life upon their mental power of attention. Where professional or social success depends on the punctual observance of innumerable petty details, thwarting or starving the appetite of a generous practical imagination, the man of reflecting mind will sicken of it now and then in spite of a resolute will. Such a man working hard in London, a barrister, a journalist, a merchant, a member of Parliament, may often get his best recreation, on some off day in the term or session, by the noble river that comes down to us and invites us to visit its proper home. He uses the aid of the South Western Railway to place himself, early in the afternoon, on the banks of the Thames, anywhere above Teddington Lock. Below that point of the river's course, where it mingles with the tide that has passed Wapping and Lambeth, while the regular Cockney is quite at home on the bridge of Hampton Court, the Thames has too much the aspect of a metropolitan connection. It seems rather like an aquatic convenience or ornament of that oppressively big and noisy London, which the tired London brain-worker is pining to forget. The best part within ready access of his usual abode is that from Sunbury or Walton Bridge up to Chertsey, or two miles higher up, near Penton Hook Lock, till he obtains a distant view of Cooper's Hill beyond the wide green flats of Thorpe and Egham. The water here will be found in perfect condition, after favourable weather in the latter period of summer, for yielding the fullest benefits of a fresh-water excursion in quest of health or pleasure. The scenery, too, along the river-banks in this part, being equally removed from the town neighbourhoods of Kingston and of Windsor, is perfectly rural, and very characteristic of those quiet, homely, pleasant shires, the South Midlands, here approached by the western borders of Middlesex and Surrey. It is as much in the country as any place in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, or Buckinghamshire, visited by the earlier flow of the Thames or Isis.

Walton Bridge, with its approach road carried upon a long range of round arches, quite beautiful in form and gradation of size, across the wide marsh-meadow and waste breadth of gravel, is a good starting point. A fine reach of the river, below this bridge, extends down to Sunbury, and the Surrey shore is adorned with pleasant groves and lawns on the slope of a long stretch of rising ground, which overlooks the broad expanse of placid water and the meadows opposite. Above the bridge, after passing Conway Stakes, the reputed fording-place of Cæsar's Roman army, the path on this side presently leaves the road to Oatlands Park, and hence follows the water's brink, now in soft dry sand, now through rich grass of the meadow, and now under shady trees. The river's bank is thickly overgrown with a variety of flowering plants, some of which almost let their blossoms, purple, pink, blue, or yellow, overhang the limpid water. Even the sweet little forget-me-not is found in this situation.

Stately swans are sailing with majestic grace upon the full-bosomed flood. Cattle and sheep are quietly grazing in the luxuriant fields. The water is so clear that you may count the stones of its bottom at a depth of six or eight feet. You may see the roach suspended there, with his eager head turned up the stream, to catch his food brought down by its whirling eddies, or else hovering amid the lank bundles of weeds or beneath the leaves of the water-lilies. Yonder clump of willows, on the opposite Middlesex shore, casts its shadow on a darksome pool where the chub is now rising to snap at a tiny fly. Some of these finny tenants of the genial element, which nourishes many diverse kinds of animal and vegetable life, are doomed perhaps to find their way into the fisherman's basket. Scarcely, indeed, will they be deceived by his baited hook on a day like this, with such pellucid water and penetrating sunlight. Yet he may get a few bites in the evening, when darkness begins to close over the dimpled surface of a deep eddy. It is wiser and kinder to ask no question of the stranger with a rod and line concerning his experience of the day's sport. He affects a diplomatic reserve, like that other sportsman with his gun in the partridge-field.

What is hit—is history;
What is missed—is mystery.

So, too, with the angler's report of his own achievements, which commonly go by the same rule. Here is an enthusiastic gentleman trolling for jack or pike with a painted tin minnow. There is one who dexterously throws his mimic fly under the leafy boughs that curtain the haunt of the chub. Moored in mid-stream, a quarter of a mile higher up the Thames, is a flat-floored, square-headed punt, securely fastened at each end to the poles which are stuck in the river bottom. In the punt are two kitchen chairs, upon which sit good Mr. Briggs and his daughter, her head shielded by an umbrella from the wind at their back. They hold their fishing-rods with a solemn steadiness worthy of the most serious business in life, and watch intently for the significant bob of their cork-and-quill floats, by which they are to take notice of a gudgeon waiting to be hooked and hoisted in triumph aboard. Oh, well done! Miss Briggs has captured a fish weighing at least three ounces. But we have no patience to await the success of this slow and uncertain pastime. Here comes a pleasure-skiff, not manned but *womanned* by a couple of brave girls, the young ladies of Aquaria Villa, rowing in excellent time, as might be expected of such good musicians. They are now treating their papa and Aunt Martha to an hour's voyage on their beloved river. It is a healthful exercise for the sex, as physicians will assure us, and should be esteemed as ladylike as walking, riding, or driving a carriage. That pretty skiff is the favourite plaything of Miss Ellen and Miss Lucy; they have named it "The Grace Darling," after the famous boat-woman of the Northumbrian sea-coast. Much delight may they have in its use! The Thames has no danger for them, since they learned also to swim at their boarding-school in France. They are not left alone in traversing the broad water-highway. The arrowy flight of a slender outrigger, which lies upon the surface as light as a cane rod, shoots past them in a few instants, propelled by the skilful arms of Charley Miller, who is staying with his friends the Andersons at Weybridge. He knows the two girls of Aquaria Villa, and their gouty but kindly papa. They exchange a laughing word of salutation, with a nod instead of a bow, for the rowing must not stop. Presently, when these are gone out of sight, the dash of oars is heard again, and a crew of four well-matched pullers, with an attentive coxswain, are seen making for the snug port of Shepperton. They are bound to take in a cargo of cold beef or bread and cheese and beer at the inn of that pleasant village. In contrast with this robust and lively party, an invalid lies on a couch in a little boat towed near the Surrey bank with the aid of a rope held by the man walking along the path. A big, unwieldy barge, on its way to the canal navigation of inland districts, is likewise drawn up the Thames in tow of three horses; the enormous rudder is handled by one man, while another is engaged, as usual, in cooking something at the stove on board. But, in a silent moment, where the banks are greenest and the flowers are fairest on the grassy margin of our river, and where the alders bend gently over its smiling ripples, how pleasant it is to see you fairy-like vessel, with its swelling sail as white as the wing of the swan, glide down the rapid stream! "Youth at the prow, and Pleasure at the helm!" Its occupants are a young man and a maiden, seated beside each other, and engaged, no doubt, in such sweet converse as befits their age.



LEIGHTON, BRON.

NEAR ABBEY MILLS, CHERTSEY.—ON THE THAMES.

and this propitious hour. Heaven bless their happy love! for in the gleam of tranquil joy upon those two young faces we can read that the crisis of life is with them at the present sacred time. Other thoughts are soon aroused within us by the arrival of the next vessel, which is a steam-launch, commodiously fitted for a private party going up to dine at Windsor. Its owner and commander is a resident at Shepperton, who has ably maintained a high position in commercial and Parliamentary life. His fleets of merchant shipping have sailed over the remotest ocean paths of the globe.

The Thames is nowhere dull in the season of summer; and we could fill several pages with local descriptions of the part comprised in this notice bearing reference to Mr. B. WHITMORE'S charming pictures of its scenery. The place where the smaller river Wey, arriving from Guildford, in Surrey, finally joins the Thames, ought to be called Weymouth. It is within half an hour's walk of the Weybridge railway station, and will, perhaps, be found the most convenient port of embarkation for a brief holiday voyage. You may either take your boat down the river, admiring the grand trees and lovely gardens of Shepperton and Walton, as you pass their most important mansions; or you may pull it up through Shepperton Lock and above the weir, thence on to Chertsey Bridge and the Abbey Mills, with their tradition of an ancient hereditary tenancy for many centuries. An hour ashore at Chertsey might be well spent in viewing that quaint, old-fashioned country town, and in recalling its historical or biographical associations. St. Anne's Hill might tempt one to a longer stroll. But it is to an aquatic excursion that we have invited the gentle reader. He will not repent having come with us "Up the River."

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.

THE tragical fate of this sweet little maid is known to young and old. Who has not loved her, while following her dutiful errand to Granny's bed of sickness with a basket-load of nice things to comfort the poor old woman? Who has not shuddered at the remembrance of the wicked Wolf, that began with eating up Granny, and then got into Granny's bed, there to lie in wait for the dear, good little child, with the same ravenous purpose? Who has not trembled to hear, in fancy, the answers, full of a dreadful meaning, with which that cruel and greedy monster replied to her innocent remarks of wonder! "Granny, what big teeth you have got to-day!" she says at the last of all. "The better to eat you, my dear!" So says the Wolf, and suits the action to the word. Is it all true? Oh! never mind that! The story was told long before you or we came into the world. Look at the pretty picture, and see Red Riding Hood with her little dog, when they first met the savage Wolf in the wood. That was when the Wolf made up his mind to eat her.

"LITTLE LOVES."

HILDA'S picture wants no words—
Sitting in her silken bower,
Hilda wastes an idle hour,
Dreams of Love, and pets her Birds.

Ah! how sweet the Love-Bird's lot!
He in Hilda's hand may rest,
He may swoon upon her breast;
He may do—what I may not!

He may peck at Hilda's kisses!
"Little Love!" But I must pine;
Great, she knows, this love of mine;
The little loves have greater blisses!

"TOO HOT!"

THE saucer-full of father's tea, which this fond old man holds ready, as it seems, within reach of his little Betsy, while she sits upon his knee at the kitchen table, lacks neither sugar nor cream; yet another ingredient is wanted to make it nice. It wants only a little bit of patience, Betsy!—that is all. And you will find, in after life, that the same is true of many other things which you will naturally desire in their due season. But this lesson of waiting and trusting is one of the ways appointed to make Betsy rather wiser than Pussy, who laps her cold milk speedily and safely from a saucer on the floor. And if ever the little maiden should pout and frown at such a dispensation, her kind father or mother will perhaps quote the admonishing verse of nursery morals:—

Patience is a virtue;
And virtue is a grace;
Which has a very pretty look
On little Betsy's face!

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