

in the shade of some sweet-scented hayrick, I make idle predictions about the weather which are never established. I can do nothing in a way that has a dash of adventure in it, by crossing to Prittlewell for tea and coming back for supper. I can do nothing by gazing--and this is a most fascinating exercise--at the Sheerness forts and deciding to sail there the day after to-morrow. Indeed the study of the *dolce far niente* is not the least important in the world. Just now, I feel that there is no life so happy as that of a thorough-going loafer.

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WEDNESDAY, AUG. 31st.

Leigh is a little fishing village that sleeps near Hadleigh Castle.

Tawny-skinned, tar-grimed fishermen who look as if they existed only for the painter's brush, drowse idly in the sun, waiting the flow of tide, to set out for their fishing grounds. Others busy themselves mending sails or nets, and one old fellow tells me about "the gentle craft" of fishing for shrimps. The shrimp is a tiny cousin of the cray-fish. It is caught in a fine-meshed net, in the shallows at the Thames' mouth. Its fate is to be boiled alive and sent up to the London market. The fisher-folks live in quaint, one-storied houses with projecting eaves, dormer windows and roofs of red tiles. It is ebb of tide, and for a mile out the mud-banks are naked, except where turbid, beer-colored puddles dot the surface. Bare-footed, and with tucked up skirts, we slither along the slimy earth, and watch the grey-backed gulls swoop down on the ocean's flotsam with weird booming cry. We return treasure-trove with star and jelly-fish, fronds of crimped sea-weed, mussels and ocean miscellanies.