

THE ROCKWOOD REVIEW

our great regret we found we had passed "Sheerness" and the mouth of the Medway, and shortly found ourselves opposite Tilbury Fort, on the left bank, and Gravesend on the right, and numerous craft about, but in the dim light of dawn all seemed rather still. An interesting incident soon after we reached the deck, for we saw a boat approaching from Gravesend, rowed by two men, and they had on board a third man, a Norwegian resident of Gravesend, whose wife was one of the passengers on our ship, and who had come to England to join her husband. No doubt he had arranged to be called as soon as the ship entered the river, whatever the time. So here he was to rush into the arms of his wife in the true spirit of a lover; after their meeting they were naturally anxious to leave the ship,—but no! until the tide waters had put a man on board and examined the luggage no one is permitted to leave the ship. Considerable delay resulted. We breakfasted at 7.30, and after our luggage had been inspected, we left the ship and landed at Tilbury Fort, and arrived in London at about 10 a. m.

The last incident that happened just before we left the ship was interesting and pleasant. A large American war ship lay close by us in mid stream, and it being Sunday morning her band was playing sacred music which delighted all on board our ship.

It was an experience to us to see the Custom House officials speeding about the river in their launches, among the newly arrived vessels; each launch had about a dozen men on board, and an officer was placed on every new arrival until a general overhauling could be made. We were away just 17 days, the cost for two of us was under £30, and we could not help remarking how much may now be accomplished in

sight seeing in a very short time and at but very moderate expense.

In reference to my being on the Thames, and at its mouth, on last Sunday week, I may mention that I was at the same place fifty years ago, viz. in 1845, and have never been there in the interim. From the city to Sheerness is quite forty miles, and what a change has come over London since my first visit! The river at that time was foul with the sewage of a vast city being poured into it, and the stench was dreadful when the paddle wheels of the steamers churned up its foulness,—now all that is changed, the sewage is intercepted and carried under a vast and ornamental embankment, and this stately structure is built on the foul mud banks, which when the tide was out lay festering in the sun, tainting the air and spreading disease. If it had been permitted to remain in that state much longer there would probably have been dreadful pestilence. The sewage matter is now carried down the river banks to vast tanks, and is treated with lime, and when the residuum has settled, the mud is carried far out to sea in barges and "dumped." One gets an idea that a better use might be found for the "stuff" as manure, but the quantity is so vast that no outlet can be found for it, and water carriage to the sea is cheap as compared with any other mode of disposal.

Sincerely yours,

CHARLES BROCK.
