

rate remained at the time this story opens, ten years ago, as unchanged and unaltered as if, instead of being but an hour's run from London, it lay far north in Scotland.

Its hill rises steeply behind it; there is room only for the street between the railway and the wharves, and for a single row of houses between the line and the foot of the hill. To get into Leigh from the country round it is necessary to descend by a steep road that winds down from the church at the top of the hill; to get out again you must go by the same way. The population is composed solely of fishermen, their families, and the shopkeepers who supply their necessities. The men who stand in groups in the street and on the wharf are all clad in blue guernseys or duck smocks and trousers of pilot cloth or canvas. Broad-built sturdy men are they, for in point of physique there are few fishermen round the coast who can compare with those of Leigh.

A stranger in the place would think that the male population had nothing to do but to stand in the street and talk, but night is for the most part their time for work; although many of the bawleys go out on the day-tide also, for at Leigh the tide is all-important. For five hours in the