

The Romance of the THAMES

BY VICTOR ROUSSEAU

THE POOR FROM THE TOWER HOUSE TOWER BRIDGE IN DISTANCE



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT



LAMBETH PALACE

Before the earliest page of England's history had been written on by the legends of Caesars, some tribes had raised a rude stockade upon the eminence known as Tower Hill, and had confined the sluggish waters of the Thames between two walls, redeeming the vast marshland over which they had spread. These walls, which ran from London to the estuary, were the boundaries of the London life, bound up so closely with that of her historic stream.

Today the Thames is almost deserted there. London Bridge, save for the steamboats of the County Council. In former years, however, many a gay water pageant enlivened the river. The coronations, state entries, the lord mayor's annual procession, all were by water, while the streets (Eastcheap, Cheapside) were nothing but cheques, or markets, which contained booths, workshops and houses. State prisoners were conducted by water to the Tower. Elizabeth was so taken during her sister's reign and fifty years later her body was thus conveyed from Richmond to Whitehall. King Charles went in the royal barge to threaten his parliament, whose fiery recalcitrant members also escaped by this high waterway. The life of London centered in the Thames, which, cutting the city equally into a north and a southern portion, was the grand artery of traffic and locomotion.

Before the nobles built their stately palaces along the Thames during the 13th century the site of the city was occupied by a colony of fishermen, who after removal to Lambeth, where they survived until well into the eighteenth century. The fisheries of the Thames were famous; they only ceased in the sewage and paddle wheel period of the early industrial epoch, and the purification of the waters has already brought the smelt up to London Bridge again. Salmon were so plentiful that apprentices stipulated in their contracts that they should not be fed upon salmon more than three weekly. Says Styrpe:

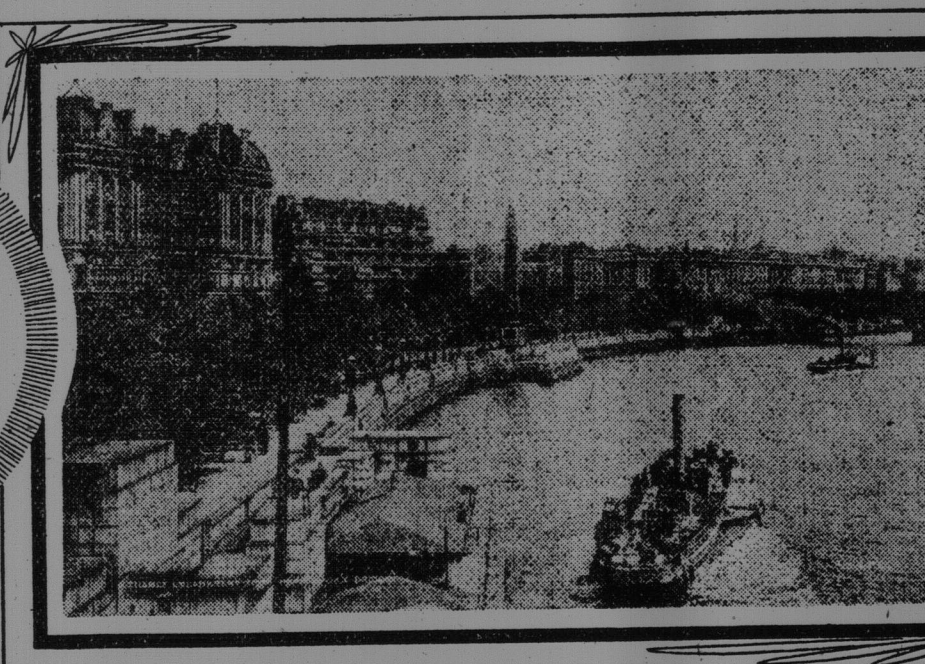
"What should I speak of the fat and sweet salmon dainties taken in this stream, and that in such quantities after the time of the smelts is past as no river in Europe is able to exceed. But what say experience better than I by reason of their daily trade in the same. And all of the body it seemeth from time to time to be as it were defrauded in sundry ways of this board of commodities by the insatiable avarice of fishermen; yet this famous river complaineth commonly of no want; but more it granteth at one time the more it yieldeth at another."

During the Lent season the butchers' stalls were completely closed, so that the fisheries acquired a great importance. In 1197 Richard I gave a charter to the city authorizing the removal by the mayor and aldermen sixteen nets, known as kelds, which had been taken in the Thames. It was proved that they were of such small mesh that they destroyed the small fishes and the salmon fry. They were burned, and the owner received a warning. In 1339 an edict was promulgated that no man should fish with nets of any but the size ordered at the Guildhall. Yet fishing with nets of small mesh must have been a common practice, for in 1343 Thomas Fishery issued the following ordinance:

All the nettes that be of largeness of a ynde throughout as wote Peters as all Peter fishers to fische throughout the year. Out taken that they move fische with steyre nettes for suell, betwene the day of Candel masse and the day of



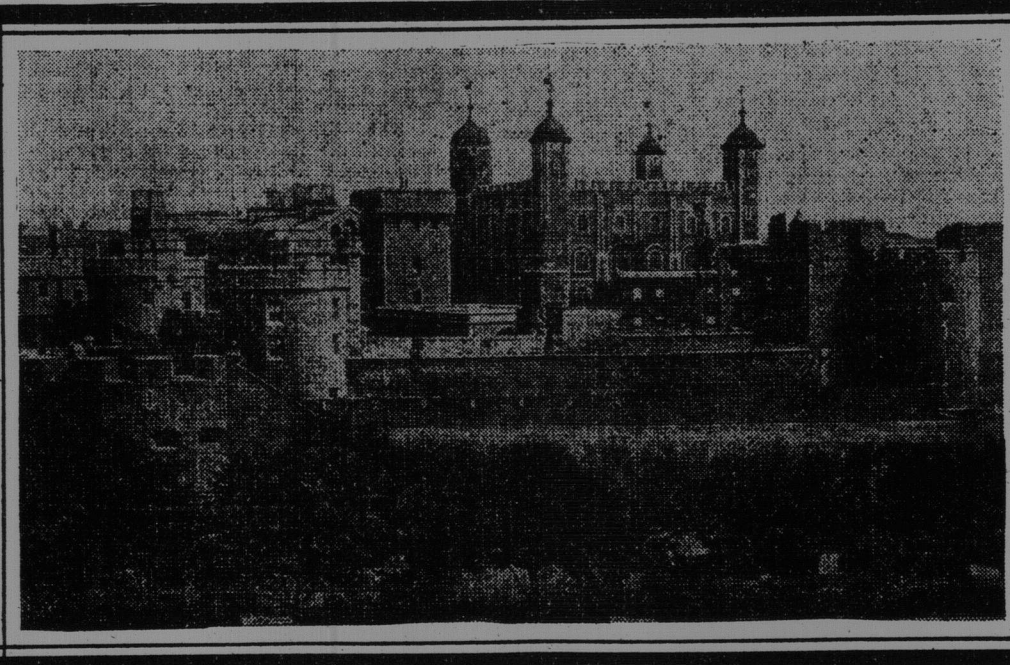
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THE THAMES EMBANKMENT



THE OLD LONDON BRIDGE



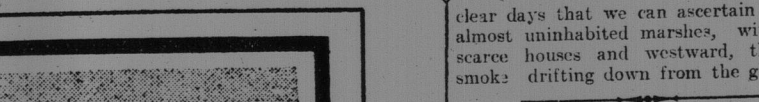
THE TOWER OF LONDON

the most historical. Close behind Cleopatra's needle, which is shown in the illustration, is the Adelphi, where once the prince, bishop of Durham, and after Sir Walter Raleigh, resided. Then comes the gigantic pile of the Cecil Hotel, once Salisbury House, the Savoy Hotel, adjacent to it, now the headquarters of the American tourist invasion, was a mighty palace held by John of Gaunt. Here dwelled in captivity King John of France, captured by the Black Prince upon the field of Crecy. The palace was sacked by Wat Tyler's men, and afterwards rebuilt as prison and hospital.

Somerset, Arundel and Essex House are gone, though streets leading from the Strand to the Embankment still commemorate them, but the Temple stands in its extensive grounds. The Temple, now the abode of barristers, was once occupied by Roman villas. The Black Friars, whose name is given to the bridge, and the White Friars, or Carmelites, settled near the Temple, below which all the famous Alsatia, a sanctuary where all the worst outlaws and desperados of London lived in security until the time of Cromwell.

Below London Bridge we find ourselves by an immediate transition, in the Port of London. On either side as far as the eye can see lie ships, moored against wharfs, covered with swarming figures, busy unloading them. Cranes, which project from upper stories, angle for freight. Toward the Tower Bridge, whose towers, unless viewed in the continual river fog, may be seen guarding the entrance to the Pool like iron sentinels, a ship approaches, with a hail hoisted at the masthead, and the lower bascules rise slowly to the signal. In the middle of the Pool a dredger is slowly grinding her way down stream. Dutch deck boats, painted in flaming green and red, squat ships with great wooden leeboards, mostly of about a thousand tons displacement, lie in the middle stream, free from dues by immemorial custom. Below the Tower Bridge, a distant forest of masts upon the left bank shows the location of St. Katherine's and the London docks, while on the right, upon the Surrey bank, arise the slender masts of the Baltic ships, with their cargoes of hides, tallow, and timber.

OLD ALBERT BRIDGE CHELSEA



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EPIDEMIC DISEASES OF PLANTS THAT COST MILLIONS

Of course, botanists and the scientists trained in the government service for watching the agricultural interest of the country are thoroughly aware that plants of all kinds are susceptible to disease of the most contagious kinds. In fact, hundreds of millions of dollars worth of damage has been done in the past 20 years by plant diseases which either eat up the grain or the fruit or the vegetable or else attack the plant itself and either kill it utterly or make it unfit for nourishing its output. The American gooseberry mildew is a dread disease which has been rampant in this country for a number of years. It has cut the output of gooseberries down to a most noticeable extent and has just been reported as having found its way into England, from which it will no doubt soon penetrate into Europe.

There are some plant diseases which are almost exactly similar to the terrible race. There is a plant disease which acts like cancer and another terrible scourge which affects lilies by fastening itself on the green heart of the plant and which, both in its origin, structure, symptoms and its advanced course is classed as a true phthisis, or consumption. Interchange of commodities between all lands is now so easy and so rapid that nations are coming to realize that plant diseases are passed along with fearful rapidity during ordinary commercial intercourse.

The hollyhock flower offers a typical case of such plant diseases. They are now very scarce all over the world as compared with the former profusion in which this beautiful plant was found. This scarcity and expensiveness is due to a strange and deadly plant disease which very much resembles the "stinking smut" which attacks wheat and which is supposed to have originated in Chili about 10 years ago. At first its ravages were entirely local and attracted comparatively little attention, but presently it broke out in an extremely virulent and epidemic form in Australia, where it destroyed almost the entire species of hollyhocks. It next reached Europe, showing up in France. Today it is a world-wide epidemic of fatal consequences, making the cultivation of the once familiar hollyhock plant a work of great difficulty and an absolute impossibility in the worst infected countries.

Tomatoes, that common vegetable, are now suffering from the attack of a deadly enemy in a sort of sleeping sickness. This disease, of course, does not put the tomato to sleep in the common meaning of that term, but its germs attack the stems of the tomato plant and it presently topples over on its side completely dead, and the appearance of acres of tomatoes lying on their sides brought about the appellation "sleeping disease" for this scourge of the tomato. This disease of plants is thought to have originated in Algeria, and thence went to France, afterward to Germany. It has not yet reached the United States, and the government is taking great precautions to keep out a disease which would destroy a familiar vegetable and ruin the business of many canners and packers.

The deadly black rot which kills the cabbage plant first appeared in this country 14 years ago, and was kept isolated here for about four years. It then got into a cabbage field of the French province of Brittany, where it swept over hundreds of thousands of acres of cabbage plants and ruined thousands of peasant farmers. It has just recently been found in England, which may soon expect a terrible attack and the loss of a large part of the produce of the country.

A disease which cost the world millions of dollars is the embossed canker, which must be described as a vegetable cancer. This scourge was first found in a single plot of coffee trees on one unimportant plantation in the Malabar hills of India, in Ceylon. It was recognized as a new plant disease, but nothing was done to prevent its spread. In a few years it had leaped to India, China, and Japan, and Africa and other coffee-growing countries, and has done at least \$50,000,000 worth of damage to coffee-growers all over the world.

Cucumber mildew (sprung from plants in Japan) soon came to the United States, and is now in England. It is doing incalculable damage to farmers. The complaint which runs cherry trees called the "witches-besom" has now begun to fasten on plum trees as well. This originated in Austria. Then came the deadly "black knot," which originated in this country, and attacks both cherry and plum trees. The lilies suffer from what is called plant tuberculosis, or consumption. Clover rot has destroyed millions of tons of fine hay and has swept like cholera over vast areas of Europe. It is just beginning to make itself felt in America. Raspberry root rot has destroyed much in Victoria, and may be expected here any season.

Since these diseases eat up millions of dollars worth of valuable food supplies for the human race governments have come to realize that it is no longer a battle with these scourges, and the man of learning is beginning to make ready for the fray. There is much experimenting and preparation being done, and the botanists are confident that in time the plant diseases will be checked, if not entirely eradicated. The trouble lies in the fact that many portions of the world are still so poorly civilized that opportunity for plant diseases to spread and develop are numerous. Quarantining against plant disease may come later, and experts may put the ban of isolation on plant products grown in countries where no precautions are taken against the spread of plant diseases. If any progress can be made an enormous loss to agricultural interests can undoubtedly be checked.

Minard's Liniment Cures Dandruff.