POOR DOCUMENT

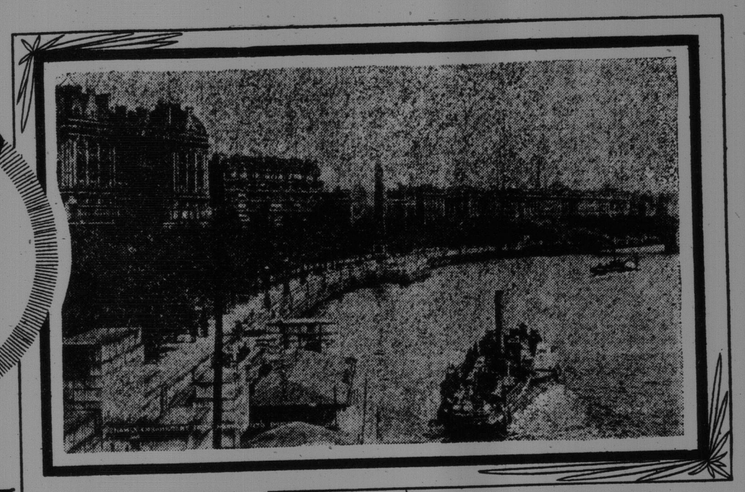
MC 2033

The Romance of the THAMES

BY VICTOR ROUSSEAU

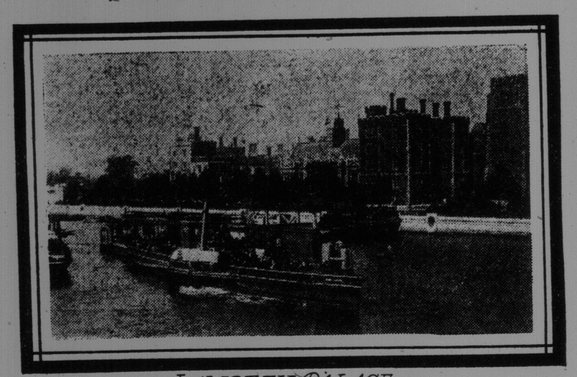
THE POOP FROM THE CUSTOM HOUSE TOWER BRIDGE IN DISTANCE

OLD ALBERT BRIDGE CHELSEA



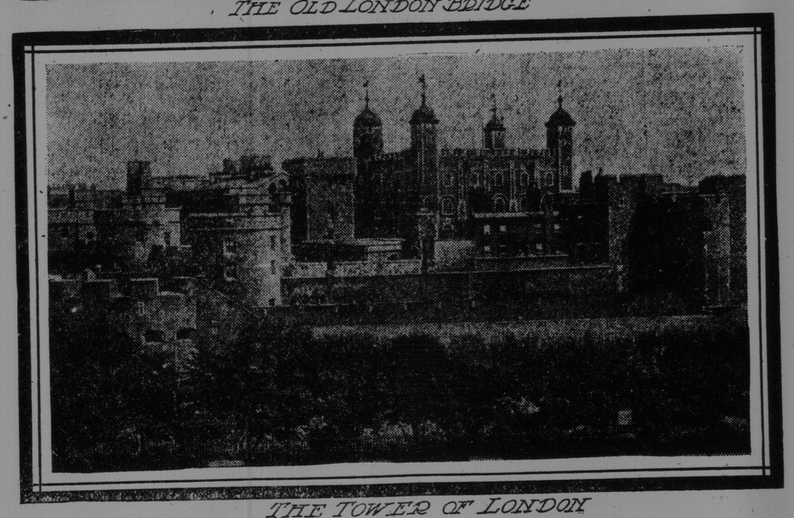
THE THAMES EMBANKMENT

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT



LAMBETH PALACE

THE OLD LONDON BRIDGE



THE TOWER OF LONDON

Before the earliest page of England's history had been written on by the legions of Caesar, 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 run from London to the estuary, were the beginning of London's life, bound up so closely with that of her historic stream.

Today the Thames is almost deserted above 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 chepes, 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 five 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 Charing Cross was occupied by a colony of fishermen, who afterward removed 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 smelts 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 thrice weekly. Says Strype:

"What should I speak of the fat and sweet salmons daily 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 store also of barbels, chevins, pearches, breams, roaches, daces, gudgeons, smelts, shrimps, eels, etc., are commonly to be had therein. I refer him to them that know by 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 hoard of commodities by the insatiable avarice of fishermen, yet this famous river complaineth commonly of no want; but the 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 of weirs. In return for this 1,500 marks were paid. In 1320 Master John le Fishmongere and others produced before the mayor and aldermen sixteen nets, known as kidels, 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 1336 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 the Thames Fishery issued the following quaint ordinance:

"All the nettes shal be of largenesse of two ynches thurghout as wele Peters as all Peter fisshers to fisshe thurghout the yeere. Out taken that they mowe fisshe with streyte nettes for smelt betweene the day of Candel masse and the day of oure lady in lente and no further, upon peyne of forfeture of his nettes and his gynnes atte the first trespas, and at the seconde trespas his body to prisonne. Also that no samon be taken betwene the Nativitee of oure lady and the day of Seynte Martyn, and also none engendrure of samon eny tyme of the yeere. Also that none lamproys ne lampreys be taken betwene the half month of April and August."

Hentzner describes the river as "abounding in swans, swimming in flocks; the sight of them and their noise is vastly agreeable." The swans, which still exist upon the upper reaches, belong to the sovereign, the Vintners' Company, the Dyers' Company and Eton College. On the Monday after St. Peter's Day, June 29, the swans are "hopped;" that is to say, marked with a knife on the upper mandible.

The bridges, were mostly built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Pilgrims could ford the river at Westminster. At the end of Horseferry Road, where Lambeth Bridge now stands, was a ferry, capable of conveying a coach and six horses, belonging by patent to the Archbishop of Canterbury. By this ferry James II. fled from his capital before the approach of William. A London Bridge was built at a very early date. The first wooden structure was replaced by one of stone during the years 1178-1206, and a toll was erected to defray the expenses. The houses on the bridge, shown in the illustration, were taken down in 1761. Many disasters have occurred to London Bridge, as recorded in the old children's song. In 1212 there was an outbreak of fire at the Church of St. Mary Overies; the people ran on to the bridge to witness the spectacle, and, by some chance, both ends of the structure broke into flames. Ships and boats were put out to the rescue, but owing to the multitudes that crowded into them they capsized, the number of deaths amounting to three thousand. The bridge was destroyed in the great fire 1666. Originally it was used only for the transportation of goods and troops the populace crossing the Thames by boat. On the south gate were placed the heads of traitors, which were first parboiled. Wallace, Jack Cade, Bishop Fisher and Sir Thomas More are among those whose features were in this way exposed to the sight of the populace. On the bridge were waterworks and corn mills, as well as a cage for women who had committed offences against ecclesiastical discipline.

The Thames watermen were celebrated for their songs, their riots and their profanity and abuse of their own and one another's passengers. John Norden states that in 1594 no fewer than 40,000 people were maintained by the river service. During the sixteenth century two thousand wherries supported three thousand watermen, besides those maintained by tilt or covered boats, tide-boats and barges. In 1822 there were still nine thousand watermen. Now there are not five hundred on the whole of the lower river. The omnibus and penny steamboat drove them out of existence. No boats ply at the stairs, which are fast falling into decay, and the Thames, as a highway, is practically unutilized, even the much-maligned County Council steamers being laid up for the winter.

The London Thames may be divided into two parts, separated by London Bridge, which marks the terminus of the port. Above we reach successively, as we start down stream, Richmond, a famous holiday resort for Londoners, the palace of the Bishops of London at Fulham, and Chelsea, from whose old Albert Bridge, Turner painted his sunsets. Then comes the Embankment, perhaps the most magnificent thoroughfare in London and the most historical. Close behind Cleoparta's needle, which is shown in the illustration, is the Adelphi, where once the prince bishops 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 was the famous Alsatia, a sanctuary where all the worst outlaws and desperadoes 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, busily unloading them. Cranes, which project from upper stories, angle for freight. Toward the Tower Bridge, whose turrets, unless veiled in the continual river fogs, may be seen guarding the entrance to the Pool like iron sentinels, a ship approaches, with a ball 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 eel boats, painted in flaring green and red, squat ships with great wooden lee-boards, 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.

Proceeding down stream from London Bridge, upon the Middlesex shore, we find our road along the river, should it be morning, blocked by an endless line of carts. We are outside the famous old Billingsgate fish market, with its two fish-surmounted domes, besieged by lines of vehicles upon the land side and by vessels upon the water, piled high with boxes of fish. Billingsgate was one of the ancient ports of the city and was built close to the north end of London Bridge, so that goods could be landed under the protection of the Roman fort. Opposite, or nearly so, upon the Surrey shore, was the old wooden Globe Theatre of Shakespeare, in a district now the meanest and most squalid of all London.

Next to the fish market is the customs house, the fifth erected upon this spot since the first was built in 1385. Each of the former ones had been destroyed by fire. Only the actual clerical staff is here, the officers being distributed in batches along the river and docks. Outside in a boat may be seen the water guard, whose duties are to inspect those ships proceeding up the Thames and to superintend the unloading of such as carry cargo. Within the customs house is the famous long room, 190 feet by 66, with eighty clerks seated around a continuous counter. Here the master of every ship arriving must deliver an account of his cargo, which is compared with the report of the consignee. The customs duties here levied amount to $50,000,000 a year, a sum equivalent to half the amount paid at all the ports of the United Kingdom. Brandy, tobacco and pirated copyrights are the chief objects of search. At each of the docks is stationed a permanent customs staff of from forty to eighty men, and not a box or bale may land until the master's declaration and entry, showing the duties payable on dutiable goods are in the hands of the customs officials.

Beneath, above and around the docks are bonded warehouses, guarded night and day under lock and key. St. Katherine's Docks can hold 110,000 tons, the London Docks, 250,000, and the Royal Albert Docks near Woolwich, where all the tobacco imported into London is stored, a still larger quantity. Confiscated tobacco now goes to the army and insane asylums; but formerly all captured contraband was burned at the London Docks in a huge furnace, where as much as a bushel of paste diamonds, 600 hams, 4,000 pirated novels, 2,000 pairs of gloves, 2,000 pounds of tobacco and 50 boxes of cigars have been consumed in a single morning.

There are three principal docks in East London—the London and St. Katherine's, the West and East India and the Milwall. St. Katherine's Docks were once the "fair gardens" founded by Matilda, the wife of Stephen of England, and continued so for nearly seven hundred years. The London and St. Katherine's Docks were built during the first decade of the nineteenth century. That was in the days of small competition and large, easy profits. Toward the middle of the century the owners of riverside property first began to awaken to a realization of the value of their possessions. Then new wharves were built continuously and competition commenced. At that period corn and timber porters and stevedores earned from ten to fifteen dollars a week, but the slow increase in the value of goods was counterbalanced by declining profits and shrinking values, while trade fell off owing to the opening of continental routes, and it soon became necessary to cut down the pay sheets. By the year 1872 wages had gone so low that the casuals of the docks struck for ten cents an hour in place of half a crown a day—and gained it. Notwithstanding this success, the conditions of dock labor are now more miserable than in any other line of industry. Dock labor is the employment offered by the import trade, the export being under the direction of a body of skilled laborers known as stevedores, independent of the dock companies, with whom the shipowners contract directly. As soon as the ship has entered in the charge of the transport gang, who place her in her proper berth for discharging, the ship gangers and their men swarm on to the deck and into the hold, unloading goods. As these are passed out the warehousing gang tip them on to trucks or run them into the warehouses, or on to the platforms of the cranes. The dock companies not only store goods, but prepare them for sale. Coopers are to be seen mending casks and plugging them, after the contents have been tested by the government officials. Rum is vaulted, colored and reduced to standard strength. Tally clerks, engaged at ten cents an hour, sit making their inventories. Old men and boys are busily cleaning and sorting spices. As each man passes through the gates he is "rubbed down" by the dock police, who stand conspicuously in evidence to prevent smuggling and petty thefts of goods which are so tempting to the casual laborer.

At the East and West India docks tea, sugar and tropical woods are unloaded. The Rum Quay has a capacity of 40,000 puncheons, with vaults of brick 154 feet in width. The import dock covers 30 acres and is flanked by half a mile of warehouses. It is said that visitors to the vaults return to the air with all the symptoms of drunkenness, caused by the aroma from the rum puncheons. The laborers at this dock have their necks covered with a calloused growth known as a "hummie," caused by the continuous pressure of the great timber logs, which they carry with the ease and dexterity of long practice.

About ten thousand casual laborers inhabit the squalid region in the vicinity of the docks, earning from three to four dollars a week by doing odd jobs, and inhabiting miserable one-room lodgings, which rent for about seventy-five cents or a dollar a week. Every morning when the dock gates are opened thousands of these half-starved wretches struggle through and crowd behind the ropes to await the possibility of a job. The permanent laborers, who can usually earn the princely stipend of five to six dollars a week, are, of course, first engaged; then the "preference" men are taken on. When these have all been engaged a thrill of interest passes along the line. The mob struggles and jostles, each man stretching out his hands clamorously in the effort to attract the compassion of the overseer, who walks up and down in front of the ropes, from time to time dexterously slipping a ticket into the hands of some casual who takes his fancy. After all those hands needed have been engaged the rest slink away sadly, to loaf around the gates or the public houses when they can get the price of a pint of beer, in the hope of the arrival of another vessel later in the day, or of some "job" which will provide them with the price of another drink or a bite of supper in the evening.

Further down the river, at Wapping, are the headquarters of a famous body of men, the Thames police. Inside the unpretentious building are to be seen telescopes and cutlasses hanging from the walls, the latter often employed in fights with smugglers, though not to so great a degree as in former years, for the Thames is constantly patrolled from Fulham to Crayford Creek. The men look businesslike in their blue uniforms and wide-peaked yachting caps, embossed with a nickel anchor. The boats, which are always ready for launching, are rowed by three men and steered by the inspector, two leaving the Wapping stairs every alternate hour, one in the direction of Waterloo and the other toward Blackwall. There are also supervision boats to visit the patrols and receive the reports, as well as four steam launches and the boats of the detective staff. Inspection needs to be thorough and complete. Many a dead body is recovered from the stream, many a suspicious vessel chased and boarded, and nearly every piece of drift-wood is grappled with an oar, for often an innocent-appearing piece of wood or matting, which seems to be floating upon the waves, has a stout cord attached and a stolen or smuggled parcel anchoring it to the bottom of the river.

Below Wapping the river begins to assume a more countrified character, and the tumbledown wharves that line it seem to prognosticate an era of commercial decay as they stand, solitary and unoccupied, amid the mud and filth that ooze around them. Close to this dismal spot is Execution Dock, where pirates were hanged in former years, their bodies being afterward swung in chains from a stake on the foreshore until the tide had flowed over them three times. The notorious pirate Kidd was hanged here in the year 1701. As we progress all evidences of commerce are centered in the large ships that pass up and downward toward the docks. Sailing barges are anchored in the middle of the stream, their blood-red sails lending a picturesque touch of coloring to the sordid squalor of the tumbledown tenements on each side of the stream. Slowly the masts are hoisted by the working of the windlass, the main sheet is hooked to the traveler, the top and foresails are hoisted, the anchor gets in with a clank, and they are off again, drifting down with the tide. As we approach the estuary, past Gravesend and Tilbury, with its old fort, tugs appear, helping the great ships toward their anchorage or the ocean. The larger vessels steer east through the downs; the coasting traffic northward, through the navigable channels marked by the Nore lightship. The shores are now scarcely visible through the haze of the mists that brood always over them; it is only on clear days that we can ascertain the low, almost uninhabited marshes, with their scarce houses and westward, the black smoke drifting down from the great city.

C. P. ENGINES COLLIDE AT ST. STEPHEN YARD

St. Stephen, N. B., May 8—The engine of the Woodstock train with George McKinney at the throttle, when turning from the roundhouse to take usual siding, collided with the yard engine in charge of Allen Barlett and Fireman Arthur Logan this afternoon. When the engines came together Engineer Bartlett was caught and his hands and legs were severely scalded and he is now in Chipman Memorial Hospital for treatment. Fireman Logan, who was thrown out of the cab window upon a pile of rocks, miraculously escaped with but few bruises.

A similar accident occurred this same place a few years ago.

The many friends of Archdeacon Newnham are congratulating him upon his promotion as archdeacon of the Fredericton district.

WEAK HEART
SYSTEM WAS RUN DOWN

When the heart is healthy and performing its fuctions naturally, it should beat regularly seventy-two times a minute without causing its owner the slightest inconvenience or distress.

When it begins to beat irregularly or intermittently, palpitate and throb, skip beats, beat fast for a time, then so slow as to seem almost to stop, it causes great anxiety and alarm.

The least excitement or exertion seems to affect it.

Many people are kept in a state of morbid fear of death, become weak, worn and miserable, and are unable to attend to either social or business duties, through unnatural action of their hearts.

To all such sufferers MILBURN'S HEART AND NERVE PILLS can give prompt and permanent relief. Mrs. B. Fletcher, Sault Ste. Marie, West, Ont., says: "I have been troubled for four or five years with weakness, and run down system. My feet were always cold and I felt almost dead. My heart was weak and I was so nervous I could hardly walk across the street. I started taking Milburn's Heart and Nerve Pills, and after using three boxes I felt much better. I continued their use until I had taken twelve boxes and I am now well."

Price 50 cents per box or 3 boxes for $1.25 at all dealers or mailed direct on receipt of price by The T. Milburn Co., Limited, Toronto, Ont.

All Turn Believers

Many have aches and pains that for years have defied all treatment. But once "Nerviline" is used, doubt turns into belief the aches, pains or bruises exist that Nerviline won't cure. Uneasy limbs may rest on the outside they can't penetrate—but Nerviline rubs right in, reaches where the nerves and muscles are sick, applies the healing, soothing properties and away goes neuralgia, rheumatism, lumbago—any ache or pain that needs curing.

Much sickness saved in the home by promptly applying "Nerviline." For minor ills and children's sick spells, Nerviline is as good as the doctor; try a 25c. bottle.

Is Your Cold Better?

No, it's as bad as ever and nothing seems to help it. You must use "Catarrhozone." It drives a cold out in one day. Healing, pleasant and certain. Get it today how you find Catarrhozone, just and tomorrow cold, bronchitis, or catarrh is gone. Sold everywhere, 25c. and $1.00 sizes.

ABOUT FEMALE AILMENTS
Not Hard to Cure if Properly and Promptly Treated

Ask any intelligent physician what causes nine-tenths of all female disease, even including anaemia, nervousness and consumption.

Back comes the answer quick and sharp "Constipated Bowels."

There is scarcely a single female ailment that had not in its earlier stages symptoms of constipation.

How much better off the system is without the poisonous accumulations caused by constipation. How much clearer the complexion, how much fresher one feels when the system is pure and clean.

Think it over yourself.

Isn't it apparent that a bowel regulator and liver stimulant like Dr. Hamilton's Pills is sure to do good?

Gay spirits, good looks and happy health have returned to many a sick woman through Dr. Hamilton's Pills.

Better get a 25c. box today; purely vegetable, free from injurious ingredients, healthful and antiseptic. Dr. Hamilton's Pills will assist you in a thousand ways. To delay is always dangerous; your plain duty is to follow the example of Mrs. F. Rowe, who sends the following letter from Travels, Port Au Port, Newfoundland: "Four years ago I got kidney and bladder trouble. I thought it was 'female trouble' and treated it accordingly. Even my doctor in St. John said it was so.

"In reading about Dr. Hamilton's Pills I noticed symptoms like mine and I bought six boxes. These pills went right to work on my sick condition and helped me from the first. My supposed female trouble, which was bladder disease, was cured. My weight increased eight pounds and never before was I as well as today. Dr. Hamilton's Pills did it all."

All dealers sell Dr. Hamilton's Pills, 25c. per box or five boxes for $1.00. By mail from N. C. Polson & Co., Hartford, Conn., U. S. A., or Kingston, Ont.