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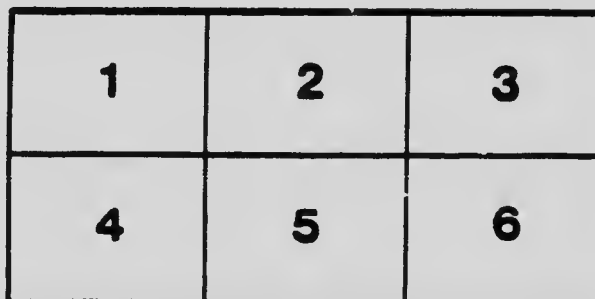
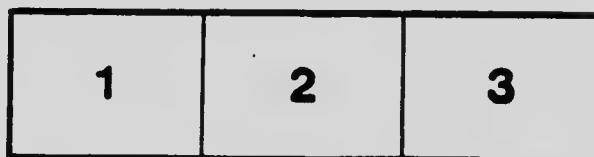
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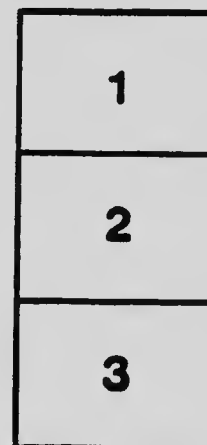
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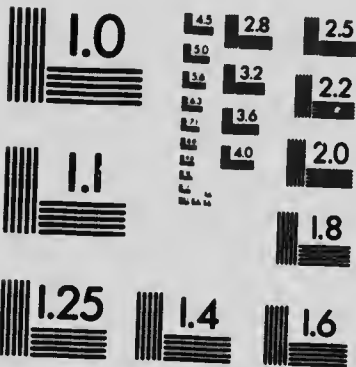
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# LONDON TO THE NORE

## CHAPTER I

### WESTMINSTER



**D**ING, dong, ding, dong, dong, ding, ding, dong, chime the great bells of Westminster, filling the warm still air with sound, and, after a slight pause, slowly booming the hour of eight.

The sun has dipped, leaving the sky a glorious orange merging into yellow, which in its turn melts into the twilight blue. The huge pile of buildings on either bank, the bridges, and the craft are reflected in subdued tones on the smooth surface of the river, making as peaceful a scene as could be well met in the very heart of this greatest of cities, the muffle roar of which is carried from bank to bank.

## London to the Nore

As the twilight deepens, the glorious pile of Westminster looms darkly, and its towers and pinnacles stand out in strong silhouette against the sky. The great Jack has floated down ; and a bright light has taken its place at the top of the tower, an indication to all London that our lawmakers are still at work. Gradually the face of the great clock brightens, assuming the look of a watchful eye. The tide is very nearly full ; the tugs still pass up in mid-stream with their long tows, dropping a barge at one buoy, then another ; the out-going craft are beginning to creep down in the slacks on either bank.

We had sailed up the Thames, during the heat of the day, along with scores and scores of barges working tack and tack together. As we were well scrubbed, we held our own with the best of them, which put everyone on board in a cheerful frame of mind.

The smaller children did not much enjoy the tacking ; but when our mast was safely lowered away, and the Princess (our invalid daughter) and Baby were put into places of safety in the rope-encumbered deck, the full joy of the hour began. The tow-line was passed forward, and we formed part of a tail of six barges, the observed of all observers.

We are a fairly large company on board. There are the Master, a full-grown son, two pupils—one a lady (whom we consider a beauty)—our Princess, her own particular nurse, the Baby, his nurse, Captain Webb, a hand, and the maids ; not forgetting myself, as my sister puts it, “ the mother of us all.”

## Westminster

The delight of our Princess was unbounded when we reached the Tower Bridge, as she recognised it from her father's pictures. Just as we came up well in view, the great bascules opened and let through two or three big steamers; they were closing again as we towed under. Ours was a waggly tail, drifting from side to side with the sets of tide and to avoid ships and anchored barges.

The Master was hard at work making rapid sketches of the groupings of the various vessels, our own tow, and the quaint attitudes of the working bargee. Bridge after bridge we passed under, for a moment in complete cool shade and a smell of damp, the outside sounds ceasing and only the splash and swirl of the waters filling our ears—into the sun again, which seemed to shine more brightly, while the noise all round was louder, for the few moments' contrast of coolness and quiet.

We tow through Charing Cross Bridge, and make a sign to the tug-master to let us go. He manipulates his tail wonderfully, and, before letting go our rope, turns in a great half-circle so that we are swung close to the buoy we want to hold on to, alongside some half-dozen dumb barges filled with coal.

All hands at once heave round on the windlass, and the sharp click, click, click of the pawls tells with what a will the crew are working. The head of the mast rises slowly but surely, lifting with it a perfect mass of ropes that writhe like snakes all about the decks;

## London to the Nore

they have to be watched and pounced upon to clear them from the skylights.

At the last click of the pawl and the Skipper's "Make fast, there!" I take a look round at the beautiful sunset, and, with a sigh at leaving it, go below to see about dinner. Pleasant odours greet me from the galley. The table is laid in the saloon, the lamps shedding a pink glow over the bright glass, silver, and linen.

The Princess is in her comfortable corner, well backed up with cushions, and points out the flowers that had not been forgotten when leaving home. She and Nurse have been busy filling the bamboos that hang all round on the walls and make the cabin sweet and cheerful. Our nurse, too, is no longer the very spick-and-span little lady in white sister-Dora cap and apron; she has turned nautical, and now sports the neatest of blue-cloth garments and quite a stylish man-o'-war cap with a white cover, from under which little tendrils of golden hair escape, making a pretty frame to a sweet face.

Our Beauty is sitting on the sofa near the girl, with her eyebrows slightly raised and ever such a little frown on her usually calm countenance as she turns over the leaves of a sketch-book, evidently not quite satisfied with her own work. The Master comes into the saloon at the moment, drawing his hand across his forehead, having evidently worked his hardest on deck, as he usually does.

Steward comes in with dinner, and the boys come

## Westminster

down the cabin stairs as if they had been thrown from the top.

A silence, broken only by the tap of the spoon on the plate and the sound of eating, ensues for a short space.

"Now," says the Master, as the cloth is being cleared, "let's talk about our plans. It will take me all my time to paint Westminster. Can you be happy here for a week? There will be plenty going on all round for you boys to do; and Didie, instead of her flowers, will have to take to barges, which will be quite as good practice. You, Mim" (meaning me), "I suppose, will do the catering, and at the same time can go round to the different points of interest and describe what you see as well as you can. How would it do to begin with Lambeth Bridge, which won't be much out of your way if you go to the Stores?"

I think it will do nicely, but suggest we should go on deck, as the air is lovely, and we can finish our plans just as well in comfort on our deck-chairs. We are lying between Charing Cross and Westminster Bridges. The swirl of the tide round the buoy, its trickling against our chain, the creaking of the lee-boards, and the many sounds on board a boat, begin to make one feel drowsy. The cabin lamp shines with a glow through the skylight; the boys are just visible by the little red sparks that flicker up and down as they draw at their pipes; rowers seem to steal along in a stealthy way, the dip of the oars sounding faint in the summer dark; and the hum of the city forms an accompaniment to the thoughts that wander through one's brain.

## London to the Nore

Who would think that Westminster had been an island in the days when the river wandered at its own sweet will, before man had embanked, bridged, and dredged? Yet if you happen to be passing where any building is going on, there, sure enough, is the bright, clean sand of the river-bed, with the shells sprinkled in it! Sebert, the first Christian king of the East Saxons, had his palace on the island, and he afterwards built a church, which St Peter in person kindly came down from heaven to consecrate! But by the time the Confessor's Abbey was built, the branch of the Thames which cut it off from the rest of Middlesex, and can still be traced through the ornamental waters of St James's Park and Buckingham Palace grounds, had been filled up and the main river had been embanked and deepened. Many buildings, too, had sprung up around the Abbey, which was called the Westminster, to distinguish it from St Paul's, the East minster.

Just fancy London walled in, with its greatest length—a thousand yards—laved by the waters of the Thames! Old London Bridge alone spanned the river, and in those days Walbrook really was a brook that wandered right through the heart of the city into Moor fields beyond. At the west, and outside the ramparts, was another creek, much larger than the brook, running out of the Thames and spanned by Holborn Bridge, over which crossed old Watling Street.

Often has my grandfather told me how, when a boy,

## Westminster

he was allowed to visit a thieves' rookery out of which the birds had flown. Up in the top rooms were all sorts of hiding-places for concealing gentlemen wanted by the police. One room had a dummy chimney capable of holding a man, with a removable brick for feeding purposes ; and in the attic was a long plank which could be pushed out of the window right across the Fleet ditch to another thieves' lodging-house on the other side, the runaway being safe, as he drew his bridge after him. Thus, even in his day, the Fleet river, though nothing but a ditch, had uses. Nowadays all that is left is a narrow cut up to Queen Victoria Street bounded on both sides by huge warehouses.

With thieves still in my mind, I become aware of a slight sound on the other side of our hull. The Master is stretched on the upper deck, with his arms under his head, in a light sleep ; the boys are talking forward, and have evidently heard nothing : so I get up without noise and cross the deck, kneeling by the bulwarks and peeping over. The water is in deep shadow under our side, and at first I can see nothing ; then I am sure I hear a whisper, and see something dark that I make out to be a boat close to our lee-board. I go back and wake the Master, gently whispering, "There is a boat alongside in the shadow holding on to us : do you think they can be thieves ?" "We'll soon settle that point," he says ; and in his brisk way he calls, "Hullo ! what are you doing there ?" A very respectful voice answers, "We are the water-police,



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sir, on the look-out for some men who have been stealing the coal from this tier. I hope you don't mind us holding on, as this bit of shadow is an advantage to us. Some of us will be here all night : so you will be all right."

With a great sense of security we say good-night and retire to our various cabins.

The maid has brought us our morning tea and hot water. Baby has made up his mind that it is time to get up. A discreet knock ushers in Nurse, who takes him into the saloon till I am ready for his bath. Breakfast is soon over, and the girl is comfortably settled on deck, with Nurse reading the "Wallipug." Our Beauty has decided that she won't paint barges ; she will have a try at Westminster. The Pupil is painting Charing Cross Bridge, and Harold an elaborate drawing of the Clock Tower. The Master has rigged himself up a separate little awning as far aft as he can get ; but the breeze makes it flutter up and down a good deal, and, watching him with rather an anxious eye, I can see that work is not going smoothly. The barge will take sends from side to side, and little bits of sun will get on to his canvas. Can you imagine drawing Westminster and all its small detail on a thing that won't keep still ? I am sorry for him ; the struggle will be tiring.

"What will you all have for lunch ? I shall go ashore now and do the catering."

The men are at the gangway with the boat ; and,

## Westminster

with reminders from one and another of the things I am not to forget, I am rowed to Westminster Pier. It is very hot on shore, and I have never been such a long time catering. The pier-master, a friendly old man, took charge of the stores while I went on my way, hoping that Father Thames would inspire me as he did Wordsworth.—

Glide gently, then, for ever glide,  
O Thames ! that other bards may see  
As lovely visions by thy side  
As now, fair river, come to me.



**W**ESTMINSTER is an odd mixture of grandeur and squalor. You are impressed by the Houses of Parliament on one side and the Abbey on the other. Then come some good houses and a beautiful old square, within which the stress and noise of the outer world is echoed faintly. The street narrows, and on both sides are small, pinched-looking houses with broken panes in the windows and a look of neglect and decay. On the left-hand side, in a rather better-looking row, I notice *The Morning Post* Embankment Home, wondering what is the purpose of the institution; and so on, a little farther, to Lambeth Bridge, which is no longer considered safe for heavy traffic.

Looking to the left from the bridge you have certainly the best view of Westminster. The Victoria Tower stands boldly against the sky with its crowned pinnacles, centre roof, flag-staff, and huge Jack; and you see the Clock Tower, the central spire, and

## Westminster

many lesser towers—for the most part highly ornamental smoke-stacks and chimney-pots. The British Lion is present all over the building, generally sitting on his hind-legs and holding a little flag-staff; and there are roses, shamrocks, thistles, crosses, and crowns—interwoven emblems of Empire.

The trees in the garden somehow seem out of keeping. All of them lean a little to one side, which injures the delicate tracery of the long side-body of the building.

Elbowing this stately pile are crowded wharfs, grimy buildings, and big furnace chimneys, over which rise the twin towers of Westminster Abbey and the splendid choir with its flying buttresses. On the right of the bridge is Lambeth Palace, the stately home of the Archbishops of Canterbury, with square castellated towers of brick that have seasoned to a lovely dull deep red, set off by the stone copings, the small windows with their leaded panes, the Gothic gatehouse. Lollard's Tower and huge Hall are a history in themselves. I notice, too, that the gardens of the Palace have been made into a public park; they must be a delightful resort for the people of this crowded neighbourhood. Camden describes the place as "Lambeth or Lomehith—that is, a dirty station or haven, formerly made famous by the death of Canutus, the valiant king of England, who there breathed out his last in the middle of his cups. . . . About the year of Christ 1183, Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, by an exchange with the Bishop of Rochester, got a

## London to the Nore

mannour in this place, wherein he began a palace for him and his successors, and this by little and little was enlarged. But when the archbishop began to have thoughts of building a small collegiate church here, good God! what numbers of appeals were packt to Rome by the monks of Canterbury, and what threatenings, threatenings, and censures were levelled by the Pope against the archbishop! for the monks were jealous that this might prove an encroachment upon their privileges, and deprive them of their right to elect the archbishop; nor could these disturbances be quieted till the little church they had begun was, at the instance of the monks, levelled to the ground."

St Thomas's Hospital comes next. It is seven great blocks of buildings connected by arcades, with the chapel in the middle. In the balconies lie the consumptive patients, undergoing the open-air treatment, which, even so close to the mists of the river, is a success. I can make out bright faces peeping through the balustrades, watching the passers-by on the Embankment. Along the colonnade stroll the convalescents in their scarlet jackets; on the terrace the little ones' shrill voices rise in play, making you feel that St Thomas's, with all its mass of suffering, must yet be a pleasant hospital to be ill in.

On the Embankment, basking in the sun, are terrible specimens of London's fallen poor. Not a seat is unoccupied. There, on this fine open space, with its pretty avenue of green trees, are many miserable creatures—among them a girl with red cheeks and

## Westminster

a mass of tumbled black hair, her head fallen forward on her breast in a deep sleep; a callous-looking youth sits beside her, watching the tugs manœuvring their tows through the bridge. On the next seat is a worn woman, her thin hands tightly clasped across her knees, her eyes dull with misery. What will become of her? Sullen men are sleeping uneasily in the sunshine.

Big Ben booms a quarter to five. The afternoon sun lights up all the tracery on the building, filling in the windows and hollows with a filmy blue mist. On the riverside all is in shadow; the Terrace looks grey and cool. Guests begin to assemble. Ladies, beautifully dressed, are met by Members, and escorted to tea at daintily set-out tables. Low, soft chatter and rippling laughter come across; but the poor people sleeping in the sun linger in one's thoughts. I feel miserable as I hurry along Westminster Bridge to the pier. I long to get on board and talk about other subjects.

The pier-master whistles for the boat, and, after a little waiting, is answered from the barge. My eye is caught by Thornycroft's spirited group of Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni, furious at her wrongs, driving her scythed chariot through her enemies, which stands at the head of the long flight of steps leading to the bridge. Behind rises the great Clock Tower, the whole making a rare combination of statuary and architecture. The bridge, too, looks very well, with its seven low arches of iron borne on solid piers that are made of

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granite. It has a fine, broad roadway. It is built on the site of the first bridge, the opening of which is quaintly described in an old History of London :—"On the seventeenth of November, about twelve o'clock at night, the new Bridge of Westminster was opened with a procession of several gentlemen of that city, the chief artificers belonging to the work, and as great number of spectators, preceded by trumpets, kettle-drums, etc., with guns during the ceremony. The first stone of this bridge was laid on Monday, the twenty-ninth of January 1738-9, so that it had been eleven years and nine months building, but would have been finished sooner if one of the piers had not given way, and protracted the time for completing the work. 'Tis now 'lowed by the judges of architecture to be one of the grandest bridges in the world. All the next day, being Sunday, Westminster was like a fair with people going to view the bridge and pass over it. Thirty-two lamps were fixed up, and twelve watchmen appointed to do duty every night to prevent robberies and irregularities."

I am very glad to be on board again. Tea is spread out on the upper deck, and my sister is presiding. The craft looks very cool and comfortable, under the awning, after the heat and glare of the street.

Hungerford Bridge, before its removal to Clifton, stood exactly where the present Charing Cross Bridge now stands. Indeed, the great brick piers help to support the new structure. From the old bridge the

## Westminster

vast iron pillars were lowered down into the river-mud. Whistler's etching shows the whole work in progress. As can be imagined, the taking down of the old bridge was no easy matter. One day a link of one of the long chains snapped, bringing the whole length down on the bridge with a run, but, luckily, without injuring anyone.

In the river, to the west of Charing Cross Bridge, is a great timber structure covered with buildings and cranes, in the middle of which are the cylinders leading down to the tube-railway passing under the river from Waterloo to Charing Cross. The men are hard at work in the compressed air behind the air-lock; and, right in the tideway, great bubbles keep rising to the surface with a hissing sound, made by the compressed air, which is forcing itself through the beds of shingle, and vividly suggests the dangers and difficulty of the work.

Passing under the great railway bridge that spans the road and vibrates and rumbles with the endless trains rushing across, I turn out of the noise into the prettily laid-out gardens, bright with beds of scarlet geraniums and fragrant flowers. Little ones are playing on the paths; worn-out children, not much older than the babies, take a spell of rest on the seats. In the middle is a bandstand; and, in the corner near the end of Buckingham Street, is Inigo Jones' old water-gate, where the beaux and belles used to land in the days when the Thames watermen wore top-hats, full-skirted red coats, and great badges. Later, where now



## London to the Nore

are the flower-beds, coal-barges were moored in the mud between lines of tall posts.

A little farther along the Embankment Cleopatra's Needle stands up amidst the heat, the red granite peeping out through the grime as the sun's rays beat down among the man-headed birds, eyes, wings, beetles, and mystic emblems of immortality carved by the Egyptian sculptors at Syrene more than three thousand years ago. From the quarries it was rafted seven hundred miles down the Nile to Heliopolis, where it stood before the temple of the Sun God for fourteen centuries, until Augustus Cæsar ordered it to be brought to his gorgeous palace at Alexandria. Time rolled on, and the grand building became a pile of ruins. With years the sea advanced and washed the base, and at last the great obelisk fell upon the sand, where it lay unheeded for three hundred more years. Then Mehemet Ali made a present of it to the King of England, in memory of Nelson and Abercromby; but, though the British soldiers in Egypt willingly gave up some of their pay and raised £7000 towards the expense of its removal, little was done, and the old monument still lay unnoticed. At length, in 1877, Professor Erasmus Wilson offered to pay the cost of removal to London. A cylinder of plates having been built round the needle, it was rolled down the shore into the sea after three months and a half of work. The steamer *Olga* towed the *Cleopatra* (as the strange craft was named) until the Bay of Biscay was reached, where, in a gale, her ballast shifted and she went over on her beam ends.

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CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE AND SOMERSET HOUSE





## Westminster

Six men were drowned in an effort to bring off the crew ; and at last the tow-rope was cut and the Needle abandoned, to roll about the Bay for sixty days. At the end of that time it was towed into Vigo by a steamer that had found it still floating. After three more months in harbour the *Cleopatra* started again. She arrived in England on January 20, 1878. What a mushroom city our London is in comparison with the venerable monolith covered with the symbols of a dead and gone faith ! Hard as old Pharaoh's heart, the granite still bears the sacred names of the forgotten gods. It may bear them in the far-distant future, when, like Memphis or Bubastis, our busy capital shall be a heap of ruins.

Having gone to Waterloo Bridge—called by Hood the Bridge of Sighs—I was leaning on the parapet, watching the barges being towed under one of the arches, when the caretaker, a man I know, came up with a civil "Good-day, ma'am !" He was just the man I wanted. What he does not know about this stretch of the river is not worth knowing ; though, 'tis true, he was a little disappointed, on one occasion, that the Master could not take in both sides of the river, the Houses of Parliament, and St Thomas's Hospital in one picture. "Suicides, did you say ? Why, bless you, you can always tell them ! Only the other day I says to the policeman, 'See that gentleman there ? He means going over.' And, before you could say knife, in he pops ! I suppose he'd lent over looking at the water, and it kind of lured him. Drowned ? Oh, no.

## London to the Nore

I whistled up Old Jim, that looks after the coaling here. He had plenty of money when we had got him—bank-notes, too—and he sent Old Jim forty francs from France afterwards. Then, there was a woman the other night. 'Pears she'd pawned her husband's clothes and got into disgrace. I could see what she was going to do ; and a nice job I had with her. You see, when a person wants to do away with theirselves, they fight, and may just as well drown you as not. The police-boat got hold of her, and whether she came to or not I don't exactly know." His pale blue eyes rested thoughtfully on the swirling tide. "But others, again, you know, ma'am, jump in to get pity taken of 'em ; and they go in near to the police-boats, as they know will get 'em out ; but they don't think of the piers that jut out, and oftentimes they injures themselves bad, poor creatures ! I don't quite know why, but more folks throw theirselves off this bridge than from any of the others, though it's one of the highest. Some people comes along and says, 'I expect you have an easy time of it here ?' but I can tell 'em we don't. To begin with, you should just see the number of cart-loads of stuff we sweep off the bridge in the early morning. Then, being watchman ain't all joy. It's not so bad in summer, when the nights are short ; but in winter—there, I'm not as young as I was. I don't mind one or two tramps ; but when it comes to three or four, it's well to keep 'em moving, as they're a rare rough lot, and if you go agin' 'em they would just as lief take you by the arm and throw you over. It's

## Westminster

been done before now, when they get to quarrelling between themselves. Well, I suppose I must be moving : so, good-day to you, ma'am !”

For a little while longer I continued to gaze up and down the river, absorbed in the shifting scene. Up with the tide drifts the dumb barge *Emma* 257, with a cargo of tarred-wood blocks. Two men are in charge ; but it is only now and then that, with a slow, long pull, they keep way on her. The crew have plenty of time on their hands, and walk up and down their little bit of after-deck chaffing all and sundry. The *Scorcher*, with six in tow full of coal, passes sedately. The next is an up-river tow, the barges being of a different shape, smaller, and cut low, so as to be able to pass under any bridge. They have a gaily painted deck-house, and a towing-mast forward for the horse-rope. Wives and children live on board ; and very picturesque they are, in their pink or mauve sun-bonnets, sitting on the deck with needlework or peeling vegetables. The men are different from their salt-water brethren—not such friendly or civil folk ; on very small provocation their language can be awful.

This bridge was built by Rennie, who was also the designer of Southwark and New London Bridges. It was opened in 1817, on the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo. In Canova's opinion it was the handsomest bridge in Europe. It cost something like £800,000. There was a penny toll for sixty years ; and, when the company get into low water, a member of the Royal



## London to the Nore

Academy tried to persuade the council, who were looking for a new site, to buy the bridge and build their picture galleries on arches over the roadway—like part of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. The idea was too original, and the site where Burlington House now stands was chosen instead.

At the Metropolitan Fire Brigade Station the man on duty kindly hailed my boat, and while the barge was tied up to the tier we felt we were in the special safe-keeping of the police and the fire brigade.

The Master was whistling while he worked—a sure sign that things were going well. The Bate was toddling up and down the deck, holding fast to a finger of his devoted slave ; Nurse was going on with the “Wallipug,” and I noticed that the men had found little jobs to do within earshot of the reader. Towards tea-time callers came on board—Mrs Hamburg and a pretty girl friend, my sister, my brother-in-law, our Partner, and another M.P. much interested in the picture of the House. My sister, who loves the girl, was keeping her in fits of laughter. I hoped the M.P. would not look round ; she had his beautifully brushed top-hat on the top of his umbrella, and was making it revolve at such a dangerous pace. Suppose he did look round ! I felt quite hot at the thought, and found difficulty in talking sense to him. Tea saved the situation. Before leaving, our Partner kindly asked us to tea on the Terrace next day. Mrs Hamburg found that she had only a few minutes to catch her train home from Charing Cross. The Master had to

## Westminster

attend an officers' meeting at Rochester, and hastily arrayed himself in uniform. The party were rowed off to the stairs just opposite the barge, and ran up the steps to find the gate locked at the top! Nothing daunted, Mrs. Hamburgh scaled the gate, and was helped over by a very greasy beggar on the other side, thus catching her train. The rest of us passed the evening quietly, reading and writing on deck till the light failed.





### CHAPTER III

#### LAMBETH TO LONDON BRIDGE

**W**E have settled to drop down through the bridges as far as the City : so the fore-stay is slacked up and the mast carefully lowered. The great sprit sticks out some feet over our stern, and the red-ochred sails and a mass of rope partly cover the skylights. The tide is still running up in mid-stream ; but we notice that there is a slack on the Surrey shore. Casting off our warp, and at the same time giving our neighbour the coal-barge a good hard shove, we cross the flowing current with many strokes of our long sweeps, and begin pulling slowly down-stream.

All morning long great coppery-coloured cumulus clouds charged with electricity have been banking and piling up ; it is sultry, and a breathless stillness hangs

## Lambeth to London Bridge

over us. As we reach the railway bridge, warm drops begin to fall, and before we have pulled many more strokes the rain is upon us with a sharp, hissing sound—like some great grey wall, shutting out everything from sight. Luckily, the children are below. Beauty and I dive down into the cabins in search of coats and oilies for the men. Under the bridge it is positively dark; and fountains of water, black with coal-dust, spurt through the crannies of the woodwork overhead, and, before we can pull the scuttle over, come racing down our polished-brass companion-way.

In company of two or three other barges that have pushed off from the tiers and wharfs, the Skipper keeps close to the Surrey side, making for the south arch of Waterloo Bridge. The lofty Shot Tower looms out of the mist, and as we come in sight of St Paul's the sky over the City is split from top to bottom by a vivid flash of forked lightning, immediately followed by a deafening peal of thunder. Peeping into the saloon to see the girl, I find that my sister has pulled down the blinds and lit the lamp, and that they are all happily engaged in a game of beggar-my-neighbour, quite unmoved by the storm.

Reassured, I go back to my perch in the companion-way. We are now passing Somerset House; then comes the Temple; then the volunteer drill-ship *Buzzard*; and soon tier after tier of steaming coal-barges are seen just on the swing, tethered to their buoys in fours and sixes. Now the whole river is on the move, and every kind of craft is making for

## London to the Nore

mid-stream. Shooting Blackfriars Bridge and the two railway bridges, we catch a magnificent glimpse of the Cathedral, in strong relief against a huge white thunder-cloud ; Bow and other City churches, glistening with wet, rise from the mist above the gaunt warehouses. We pass Dowgate, where the Scots merchants tried to rival the struggling East India Company in the time of the Stuarts ; Queenhithe, the old City landing-place so far back as Plantagenet days ; and the Vintners' Hall—the tide, now running swift'y, hurrying us through Southwark Bridge.

Every vessel is trying to keep in the best of the tide, and a swin-headed barge squeezes us in towards the enormous cast-iron pillars of Cannon Street Bridge. "Plenty of weight on the port oar," sings out the Skipper ; "easy starboard !" At the same time he jams his helm hard-a-port, and just as the column seems about to wipe away our boat-davits, the helm is righted and the quarter draws away, barely touching. "Pull away on the port oar," comes the next order, "and we will bring her head to tide. Get a boat alongside and a warp ready !" Round she comes, and we drive under London Bridge stern first, a row of curious faces looking down upon us, seen for a moment and then gone. Two men tumble into the dinghy and row the warp away to a tier. "All fast, sir !" The rope springs out of the water as a turn is taken, and she is pulled hand over hand to her mooring. All then man the windlass ; and the mast is hove up, much more slowly than usual—"eaving 'eavy," as the

## Lambeth to London Bridge

mate calls it, from the weight of water collected in the sails, which empties itself in small cataracts on the decks.

It is far too moist to think of going on shore. Curling up on the comfortably cushioned locker, with the smaller table as a barricade and support to my much-venerated, yellow-leaved, long-*ff'd* translation of Camden's *Britannia*, another old history without title or cover written some hundred or two years later, my good friends Pepys and Evelyn, and various other books, I lose myself in British London, and come out on a clearing in the wood of the great forest of Middlesex, extending from St Paul's to the Bank of England. Tradition says that Ludgate and Dowgate belonged to this period. I suppose they were openings in the palisades which surrounded the settlement by which flowed the Thames—a different river then, very wide and shallow, with a lazy tide running at its own sweet will along sandy and gravel beaches, fordable at many points at low water, and at spring-tides overflowing all the flat land of Lambeth and the Borough, the marshes about Greenwich, and the Isle of Dogs.

There is reason to believe that there were two settlements, one on the north side of the Thames and one on the south. It was certainly an important commercial centre when described by Tacitus, though Bishop Stillingfleet does not believe it was older than the time of Claudius. In 1867 General Pitt Rivers discovered near London Wall and Southwark Street some pile-dwellings in the peat just above the virgin gravel, with much refuse of kitchen-middens and

## London to the Nore

broken pottery. The Romans, we know, occupied London for nearly four hundred years—43-409 A.D. At first it was a comparatively small place, with a military fort to protect it. All the low-lying lands which are now crowded with houses were submerged every spring-tide. By-and-by these flats were embanked; but there is no record of the builders. It is generally believed to be Roman work. Paulinus Suetonius left Londinium to the mercy of Boadicea, who entirely destroyed it and killed many of the inhabitants.

After the time of Tacitus, in the first century, Roman coins were minted in London; and it was in Diocletian's reign, during the third century, that the Franks attempted to plunder the city; but the Thames, which always stood the Londoners' friend, luckily brought up some Roman soldiers who had been parted from the main fleet in a fog, and the natives were thereby able to destroy the enemy at Wallbrook. After this time London became so much more important that the Roman emperor allowed the name Augusta to be added; and Constantius, having heard of the place, sailed up the Thames and disembarked under the walls of the city. Constantine the Great, founder of Constantinople, is said to have rebuilt the walls of the city at the request of his mother, a native of Britain. This wall not only encircled the town from Aldgate to Bishop's gate, from Alder's gate to Ludgate, but also fortified the river-banks. William Fitzstephen, a monk who lived in the twelfth century, mentions the walls and towers on the south as being from eight to ten feet

## Lambeth to London Bridge

thick and about eight feet deep; but the part of the wall which ran along by the Thames was quite washed away by the continued beating of the river, though there were some pieces to be seen in Henry the Second's time.

From my other old history I gathered the following description:—There were fifteen towers on the land side. One, discovered in 1753, 1385 years after it was built, stood in the middle of Houndsditch. "The tower, which is still six-and-twenty feet in height, is situated almost opposite the end of Gravel Lane on the west of Houndsditch, and is still three storeys high, but sorely decayed and rent from top to bottom. At present inhabited by a baker, about eighty-eight paces towards Aldgate, I discovered another, of the height of one-and-twenty feet, perfectly sound and much more beautiful than the other." The Roman *trajectus* or ferry intersected the river at Dowgate, near which was erected the milliarium of the Romans, which is London Stone, fixed under the south wall of St Swithin's Church in Cannon Street, where, it is supposed, they measured the distances to the several stations throughout Britain. At this place centred the Roman military ways—Watling Street, Ermine Street, and the vicinal way from Oldford and Aldgate.

There seems pretty strong evidence that there was a bridge across the river in Roman times. Throughout the entire line of Old London Bridge the bed of the river was found to contain ancient wooden piles; and when these piles were pulled up, in order that the



## London to the Nore

channel might be deepened, many thousands of Roman coins and an abundance of broken tiles and pottery were discovered, and, immediately beneath some of the central piles, brass medallions of Aurelius Commodus, A.D. 180. "Now was the Roman Empire in Britain fully expired, it being the four hundredth seventy-sixth year from Cæsar's coming in." Under the government of Valentinius the Roman forces were transported. Having buried their treasures and bereft Britain of her youth by frequent musters, they left her incapable of defence and a prey to the ravages and barbarity of the Picts and Scots.

In 604 Bede describes London as "a mart town of great traffick and commerce both by sea and land." Fitzstephen the monk has left us an account of the city in his time. He speaks of its wealth, commerce, grandeur, and magnificence, the mildness of its climate, the beauty of the gardens, the sweet clear springs, the flowing stream, and the pleasant clack of the water-mills, the vast forest of Middlesex, with its coverts of game, stags, fallow deer, boars, and wild bulls, and the young men of the city skating on the marshes.

Our beautiful Cathedral, which dominates and completes this grand part of the river, is built on the site of a church founded by Ethelbert in 607, which was destroyed by fire along with a great part of the city in 1086. Old St Paul's was begun on the same spot in 1087 by Maurice, Bishop of London, the building not being completed until 1315. Stow gives the dimensions of the old church, which are interesting compared with

## Lambeth to London Bridge

those of the new :—Height of old steeple, 520 ; new, 404. Length of church, 720 ; new, 515. Breadth, 130 ; new west front with towers, 180. Camden describes it as an exceedingly large and magnificent building, the eastern port, which seems to be the newer and is curiously wrought, having a vault and a beautiful porch. Malmesbury, an older writer still, says that “it has such a majestic beauty as to deserve a name amongst the buildings of greatest note.” According to Camden, “Some fancied that a temple of Diana formerly stood here, and there are circumstances that back their conjecture, as the old adjacent buildings being called in their records ‘*Dianæ camera*,’ i.e. the chamber of Diana—and the digging up in the churchyard, in Edward the First’s reign, of a great number of ox heads, which the common people of that time, not without great admiration, looked up to be Gentile sacrifices, and the learned know that the *tauro polia* were celebrated in honour of Diana ; and, when I was a boy, I have seen a stag’s head fixed upon a spear, agreeable enough to the sacrifice of Diana, and carried about within this very church, with great solemnity and the sounding of horns. And I have heard that the stag which the family of Band in Essex were bound to pay for certain lands used to be received at the steps of the choir by the priests of this church in their sacerdotal robes and with garlands of flowers about their heads. In 1561 the spire was struck by lightning, and the roof of the church was partly destroyed by the fire that ensued, and by degrees it got more and more dilapidated,

## London to the Nore

and in its later days the church became a sort of market ; hither came servants to be hired, and all people who had any sort of business to transact, respectable or otherwise."

In 1664 Pepys came upon a printed copy of the King's commission for the repairs of Paul's, which contained a large power for collecting money, "and recovering of people that had bought or sold formerly anything belonging to the church." In fact, it must have been very like the Temple in Jerusalem, from which our Lord drove the sheep and oxen and the changers of money.

Wren, when he undertook the rebuilding, made a proviso that the edifice should be used as a place of worship, and it was only on that condition that he undertook the work. Just before the Fire of London Wren had been asked by Charles the Second to prepare a scheme for the restoration of Old St Paul's. He proposed to remodel the greater part, as he said, after a good Roman manner, and not to follow the Gothic rudeness of the old design. According to this scheme, the old choir alone was left ; the new transepts were to be rebuilt after the classical style, with a lofty dome at the crossing—not unlike the place which was eventually carried out. In the same year, 1666, the Great Fire burned what remained, and Old St Paul's was completely gutted, though the greater part of its walls still stood.

From 1668 to 1670 attempts were made by the Chapter to restore the building ; but Dean Sancroft was anxious to have the Cathedral rebuilt, and in



ST PAUL'S, FROM FLOWER AND EVRETT'S WHARF, BANKSIDE





## Lambeth to London Bridge

1668 he had asked Wren to prepare a design for a wholly new church. In South Kensington Museum there is a model of the first design ; but it is very inferior to what Wren afterwards devised. It was an immense rotunda surrounded by a wide aisle and approached by a double portico, the dome taken from the Pantheon in Rome ; on this a second dome stands, set on a lofty drum, and this second dome is crowned by a tall spire.

It is very difficult to realise that the top of the dome of St Paul's is only as high as the springing of that of Saint Peter's. The first stone was laid on June 21, 1675, and the last stone in 1710. The Cathedral is built of Portland stone, with a wooden dome covered in lead ; and much of the ornamentation on the outside is carved by Grinling Gibbons.

Among the tombs are those of Wellington, Nelson, Joshua Reynolds, Dr Johnson, J. M. W. Turner, Leighton, Millais, and many other great and noble men.

Wren died in 1723, at the age of ninety-three. He lived for years after the completion of this great work, and in his old age his chief pleasure was to be carried to a spot where he could gaze on it. The epitaph on his tomb reads, "*Si monumentum requiris circumspice.*"



## CHAPTER IV

### LONDON BRIDGE



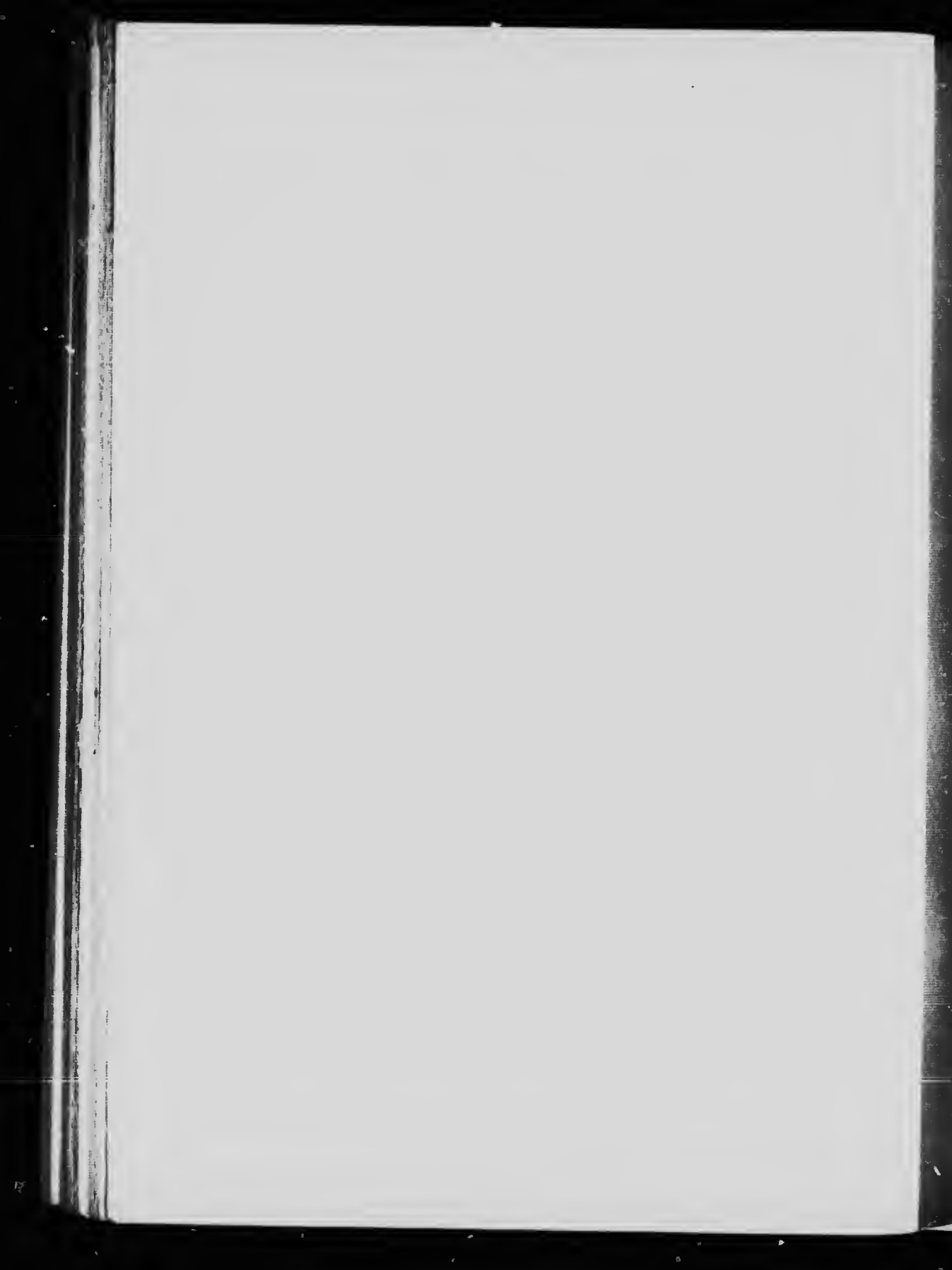
**I**T is not possible to dismiss this bridge in a few words. Its very age commands respect. The first bridge of which there is any record was built between the years 993 and 1016. When Canute attacked London a second time, and found it too strong, he made a canal on the south side

of the river, through the marshes. It is supposed that the cut began at a place at that time called Dock-head, and that thence a small semicircle ran by Margaret Hill into the Thames at St Saviour's Dock. This bridge had a troubled life. It was washed away by a flood in 1091, rebuilt in 1097, and burnt in 1136; it was again so ruinous in 1163 that it had to be built anew. A song, in all probability as old as the bridge, tells us that

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LONDON FROM THE TOWER BRIDGE (HIGH-LEVEL SPAN)





## London Bridge

"London Bridge is broken down,  
Dance over my La-dye Lea ;  
London Bridge is broken down,  
With a gay ladye."

After suggestions of all sorts of materials with which to build it up again, it is decided to

"Build it up with stone so strong,  
Dance over my Ladye Lea.  
Huzza ; 'twill last for ages long,  
With a gay ladye."

The new bridge was built a little to the west of the wooden fabric, the head of which in the days of William the First projected ashore at Botolph's Wharf. The building of this bridge was entrusted to Peter, a monk and curate of St Mary's Colechurch ; but he, poor man, did not live to see his great undertaking finished. Among the Tower records is preserved a letter from King John to the mayor and citizens recommending one Isibert as fitted to finish the bridge ; but there is no mention of his name in old histories.

The work seems to have been carried out by Serle Mercer, William Almaine, and Benedict Botewrite, merchants of London, who finished this first stone bridge in 1209. A chapel was built on the east side in the ninth pier from the north ; it was sixty-five feet long, twenty feet six inches wide, and fourteen high. This, the first building on the arches, had an entrance from the river as well as one from the street. It is described as beautifully paved with black and

## London to the Nore

white marble ; and there was a sepulchral monument in the middle, where, according to Stow, Peter of Colechurch was buried. The story that the bridge was built on wool-packs is probably based on the fact that a tax on wool was levied for its construction. The citizens were justly proud of their bridge—pleased, as Drayton expresses it,

“ With that most costly bridge that doth him most  
renown,  
By which he clearly puts all other rivers down ; ”

but seventy years only elapsed before Edward the First granted a licence to the bridge-keeper to ask and receive the charity of his well-disposed subjects throughout the kingdom, because the bridge had become ruinous. The tower at the north side of the drawbridge to give passage to ships with provisions to Queenhithe, and to resist the attempts of an enemy,—on which, also, the heads of traitors were displayed—was begun in 1426 ; but the buildings increased slowly. In 1471 there were only thirteen houses in all. However, in Stow's days both sides were built up, so that the whole length had the appearance of a large and well-built street. The bridge was nine hundred and fifteen feet one inch long and seventy-three feet wide. In 1579 the beautiful Tudor mansion “ Nonsuch House,” the house of the Lord Mayor, was built. It is supposed to have been constructed in Holland and floated up the river in pieces, which were fixed together on the bridge. The fall of the river through its narrow arches was five feet

## London Bridge

at ordinary tides. Thus, during the springs it must have been a regular waterfall. Mills for grinding corn were erected ; and, in 1582, Peter Morice, a Dutchman, contrived a water-engine to supply the citizens with Thames water ; this plan was improved upon by Sorcold, and then by Mr Hadley. The engine could pump at the rate of 46,896 hogsheads a day to the height of one hundred and twenty feet.

On February 13, 1632, forty-two houses were burnt down in less than eight hours. The Thames was frozen over and water scarce. In 1645-46 some of the ruins were rebuilt in a very substantial and beautiful manner.

Pepys, in his truthful style, describes a gale he had to go out in on January 24, 1665 :—"It was dangerous to walk the streets, the bricks and tiles falling from the houses that the whole streets were covered with them ; and whole chimneys, nay, whole houses in two or three places blown down. But, above all, the pales of London Bridge on both sides were blown away, so that we were fain to stoop very low for fear of blowing off of the bridge. We could see no boats in the Thames afloat, but what were broke loose, and carried through the bridge, it being ebbing water. And the greatest sight of all was, among other parcels of ships driven here and there in clusters together, one was quite overset and lay with her masts all along in the water, and keel above water."

Once more the bridge was burnt, on September 2, 1666. Pepys, in much tribulation, watches the pro-



## London to the Nore

gress of the trouble, first from a high place by the tower. "And there I did see the houses at that end of the bridge all on fire, and an infinite great fire on this and the other side the end of the bridge, which, among other people, did trouble me for poor little Michell and our Sarah on the bridge. So I down to the water-side, and there got a boat, and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire. Poor Michell's house, as far as the old Swan, already burned that way and the fire running further, that in a very little time it got as far as the steel yard while I was there. Everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river or bringing them into lighters that lay off; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the water-side to another. And among other things the poor pigeons, I perceive, were loth to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconies till they burned their wings and fell down." Later in the day he again comes to the water-side and goes on with his vivid description:—"We staid till, it being darkish, we saw the fire as only one entire arch of fire from this to the other side of the bridge, and in a bow up the hill for an arch of above a mile long. It made me weep to see it. The churches, houses, and all on fire, and flaming at once, and a horrid noise the flames made and the cracking of houses at their ruin. To house with a sad heart, and there find everybody discoursing and lamenting the fire."

## London Bridge

In 1746 most of the houses which had been rebuilt were ordered to be pulled down. A roadway and two good paths were needed. In 1758 an arch seventy feet wide was made in the middle to facilitate the traffic.

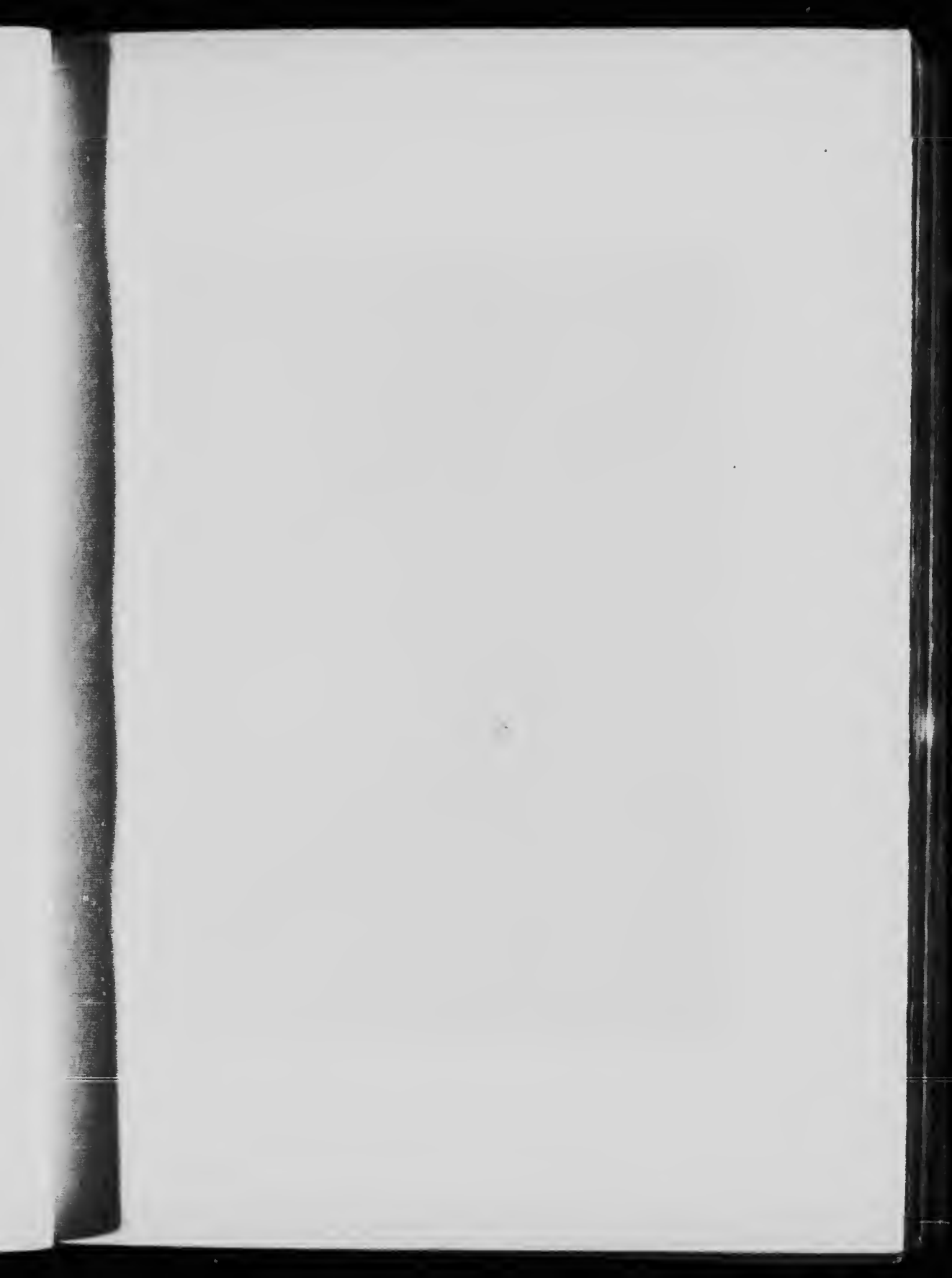
Our present bridge, designed by Rennie, was begun in 1824, and opened in 1831. It is a grand piece of work, spanning the river with its five beautiful arches, instead of the twenty which in the old days acted as a sort of weir. The increased scour after its destruction accounts to some extent for the unstable state of the foundations of more than one of the bridges. The new structure is of granite, and of late has been much improved by the widening of the pathways, the granite corbelling and open balustrade adding greatly to its beauty as seen from the water; and I think it is not generally known that the lamp-posts are made from the bronze of the cannon taken in the Peninsular War.

All night there has been so much noise that it has been nearly impossible to sleep, and one after another our party come to the breakfast-table in a more or less drowsy and cross state. But what a beautiful spot for work! As soon as all have decided what they are going to do, the Master and I, with paint-box and pencil, are rowed off to the stairs on the south side of the bridge by Fenning's wharf, which is built on the site of the old bridge. The ground we walk on is like the ingredients for a Christmas pudding. It is strewn with raisins and currants and other grocery, and from dark alleys leading under the overhanging warehouse come smells of

## London to the Nore

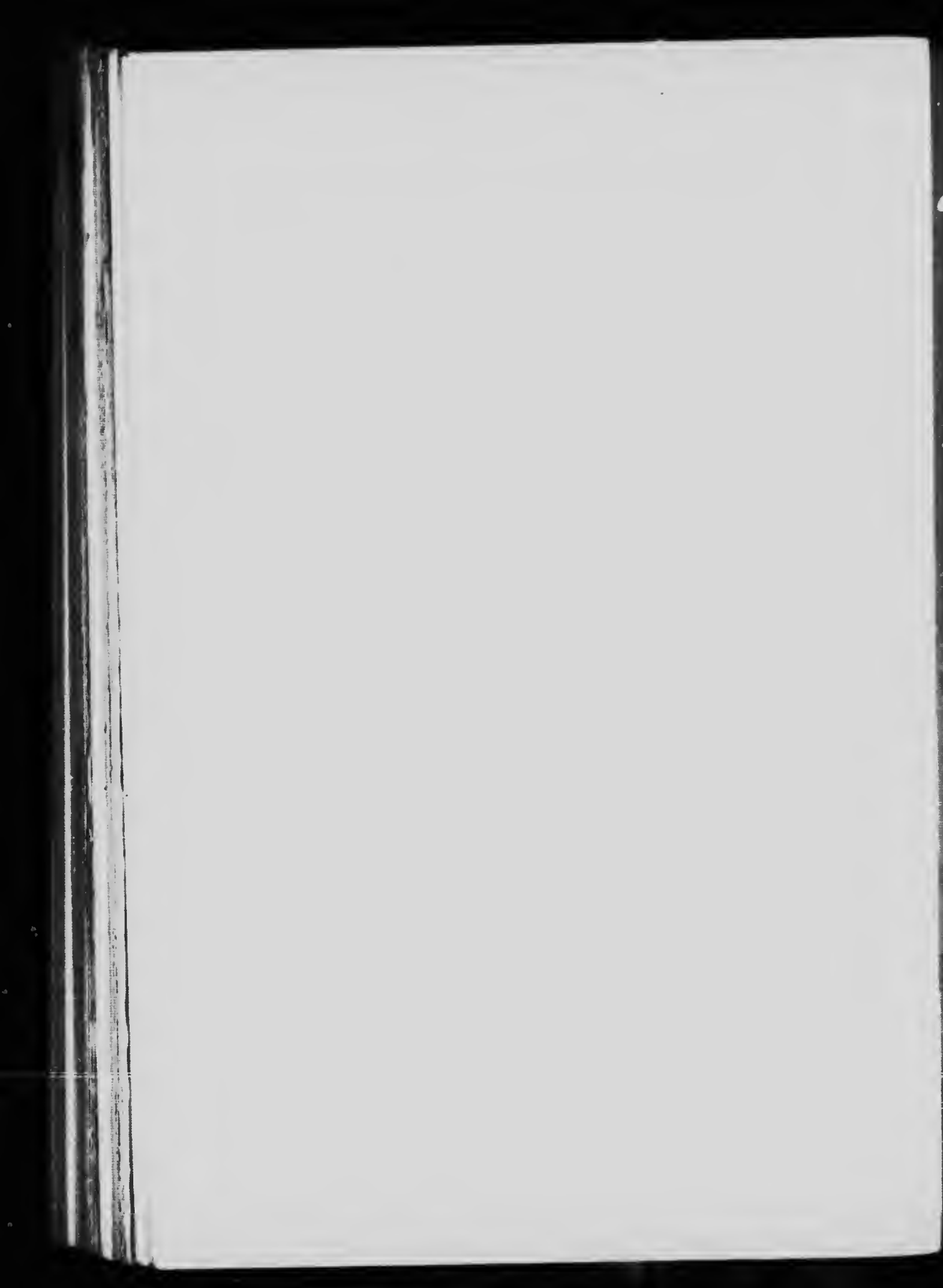
good things. Peeping in, one can descry thousands of kegs of butter, barrels of lard, cases of tea and of brown sugar. Along the front a row of hydraulic rams, with sheaves and chains leading up to the arms of the cranes, the chains plastered with a thick black mixture of grease, await the arrival of their next cargo. Nothing could look more deserted than this wharf, till a barge drifting up the river is guided alongside. In a twinkling the whole place is filled with men in long aprons. A man jumps upon the small platform attached to a crane ; he presses a handle, and the ram, like the sprite of the ring, begins winding up the chain ; a couple of men catch hold and are swung off into the barge ; up come great barrels in pairs, which are rolled away by the men in the aprons ; at the finish the two men who had vanished into the hold come up with the last pair of barrels ; a moment later all have vanished, and the wharf is silent and deserted. I look down into the empty hold. "Have you finished already?" "Yes : it doesn't take us long once we begin." "And the power—where does that come from?" "From the company at Bankside."

Just behind Fenning's is the beginning of Tooley Street, where the terrible fire raged among the wharfs in 1861. It is safest to keep in the middle of the road here ; from every high building on either side the cranes are working, lowering and hauling out merchandise of all sorts from carts lining the pathway, one overlapping the other, the horses slipping and backing on the cobble-stones. I wanted very much to see St



UPPER POOL





## London Bridge

Olave's, thinking that this church was the resting-place of my dear friend Pepys and his wife. It is just a little way down this street, with great buildings encroaching on either side; and it is borne in on one that man grudges God His acre whenever the land becomes valuable. The door was locked; but the verger had his address on a board on the wall. We went and fetched him. There was something churchy and out-of-date about the verger, though he was not an old man; and I think that all the time he was wondering when I was going to ask him for Pepys' tomb, and was conscious that he was passing off his church on false pretences. I nearly laughed outright as, passing through the vestibule, he touched the choir-boys' black gowns hanging on their pegs and said solemnly, "These are the choir-boys' cassocks; the white ones have gone to the wash!" As the choir-boys and a few school children are the only congregation, he evidently values them at their full worth. The church inside is plain and good. All the pews are still the old-fashioned high-backed ones. These and the large gallery are all oak. The pulpit is of very good shape, well-carved round the base, and has a fine sounding-board (inlaid with various woods) that was taken down when there was a danger of the church burning with the rest of Tooley Street. This was not put up again. It was made into a table, and stands in the vestry, where we disturbed two gentlemen who were poring over the register, making notes of historic facts for Somerset House. One book, beautifully kept in a



## London to the Nore

very fine legible handwriting, with the date 1585, gave us a vivid and terrible knowledge of the awful plague that raged in 1625—not the later plague that started in Colchester in 1666. The record in May is a fair average of births, marriages, and deaths. In June sickness had evidently made its appearance; there are only three or four marriages, and the deaths were eighty. In July the deaths suddenly fill page after page, all in the same calm handwriting, which, one would think, might shake a little at the bell tolling night and day and the terrible total of one thousand,—and this in a small parish! The number rises again in August, and then begins to subside;—but there are no marriages.

After looking at these, I said, "Now, show me the tombs."

The verger led us to a door which, after a little pulling, opened into a small graveyard paved all over, the graves standing raised above the path—a forlorn-looking place, grey and eaten away by the London atmosphere—the head-stones evidently belonging to graves that had been encroached upon by the wharf standing against the wall of the building. One had a touching epitaph to a much-loved wife, a space being left for the visitor to fill in what he considered the best virtues in a woman, "all of which she had." Close by was one put up to a shipmaster who wished to be buried under water. One assumes his relations considered that they had carried out his wishes by burying him in this yard on the banks of the great river.

## London Bridge

It seems a scandal that the money-grubbers surrounding this consecrated spot, and many others, should be given the power to interfere with the last resting-place chosen by the living for their dear dead. "But where is Pepys' grave?" "Well, you see, ma'am," said the vergier in a deprecating voice, "here are two churches dedicated to St Olave, and Pepys is buried in the other—across the river!"

From this bridge one sees a multitude passing and repassing—

"Laughing, weeping, hurrying ever,  
Hour by hour they crowd along,  
While, below, the mighty river  
Sings them all a mocking song.  
Hurry along, sorrow and song!  
All is vanity 'neath the sun.  
Velvet and rags—so the world wags—  
Until the river no more shall run—  
Until the river no more shall run."

And the view—nothing surpasses it in its way: men working like ants all over the ships and wharfs, the noise, the crush of shipping, the smoke and steam, and among all, the dumb craft drifting with the tide, and (as if to make a contrast) a man in flannels rowing in the lightest of outriggers! Right below us a Spanish steamer is unloading her fragrant cargo of oranges; an endless stream of porters walk up the sloping brow, bending under the heavy crates.

Farther down, the fish-carriers are clustered thick

## London to the Nore

about the pontoons and dolphins of Billingsgate. A fragrance comes over the water to us ; and if you shut your eyes a pleasant scene arises—of willows, dykes, calm waters and windmills, the clack of wooden shoes and the music of bells, in a whiff of sweet-smelling peat. The little fleet of bluff-bowed, gaily painted and varnished Dutch eel-schuits have been moored in this particular spot ever since the time of Edward the Third, who granted them a special charter to bring the eels of Friesland to Billingsgate. The fish-carriers are here in numbers, very high forward, rusty, and scarred from the rubbing of innumerable boats on the Dogger Bank, as they grind alongside to pass their catches over the bulwarks of the low waist. Their funnels are white with the salt spray of the stormy North Sea. When you meet a fish-carrier it is well to keep out of her way, for she is always in a desperate hurry. Outward bound her cargo of ice is always melting, and homeward bound her fish must be brought to the market fresh.

Coming up the river under her own steam is another picturesque old-world type of vessel, rigged as a bark and evidently built to withstand the nips and squeezes of irresistible ice-flows. She is not a whaler or an Arctic discovery ship. She belongs to the Hudson Bay Company, and is richly laden with furs and seal-skins from the frozen North. This finishes a long moving line in perspective towards the Tower Bridge, looming up in the distance like a great and beautiful portal to the river.



BILLINGSGATE FISH MARKET, WITH LONDON BRIDGE AND THE  
CHURCH OF ST MAGNUS





## London Bridge

Lower Thames Street should not be chosen for an ordinary walk. Billingsgate spreads its contents very far up and down and round about, and the whole ground is a mass of fish-scales and melted ice with a particularly unpleasant odour. The slush extends right up the brows into the great hall of Billingsgate itself, where the floor is cut into little channels like an irrigated paddy-field. Fish is everywhere, underfoot as well as overhead, as the porters lurch against us, stumbling under the weight of the great boxes as we press out again into the street. The noise is deafening, and it is quite useless to try to talk. The horses are slipping and struggling in the road ; great jams of carts are interlocked, looking as if it were impossible that they should ever get clear in the narrow space. Fish has been landed at this spot ever since Saxon times ; but the first market was only built in 1699, and improved in 1849. Bunning in 1852 built a new one, which was finished in 1877, and stands a prominent feature on the banks, the sun sparkling on the great gold-fish.

The poor Thames fishermen seem to have suffered under abuses a hundred years ago. Judged by Mr Howell's account, the industry was in a bad condition through mismanagement and monopolies. London was poorly served with fish, for which the inhabitants had to pay an exorbitant price, placing this food out of the reach of all but well-to-do people. At Billingsgate in December 1802 cod sold for two pounds apiece. This enabled butchers to keep up the high price of meat.



## London to the Nore

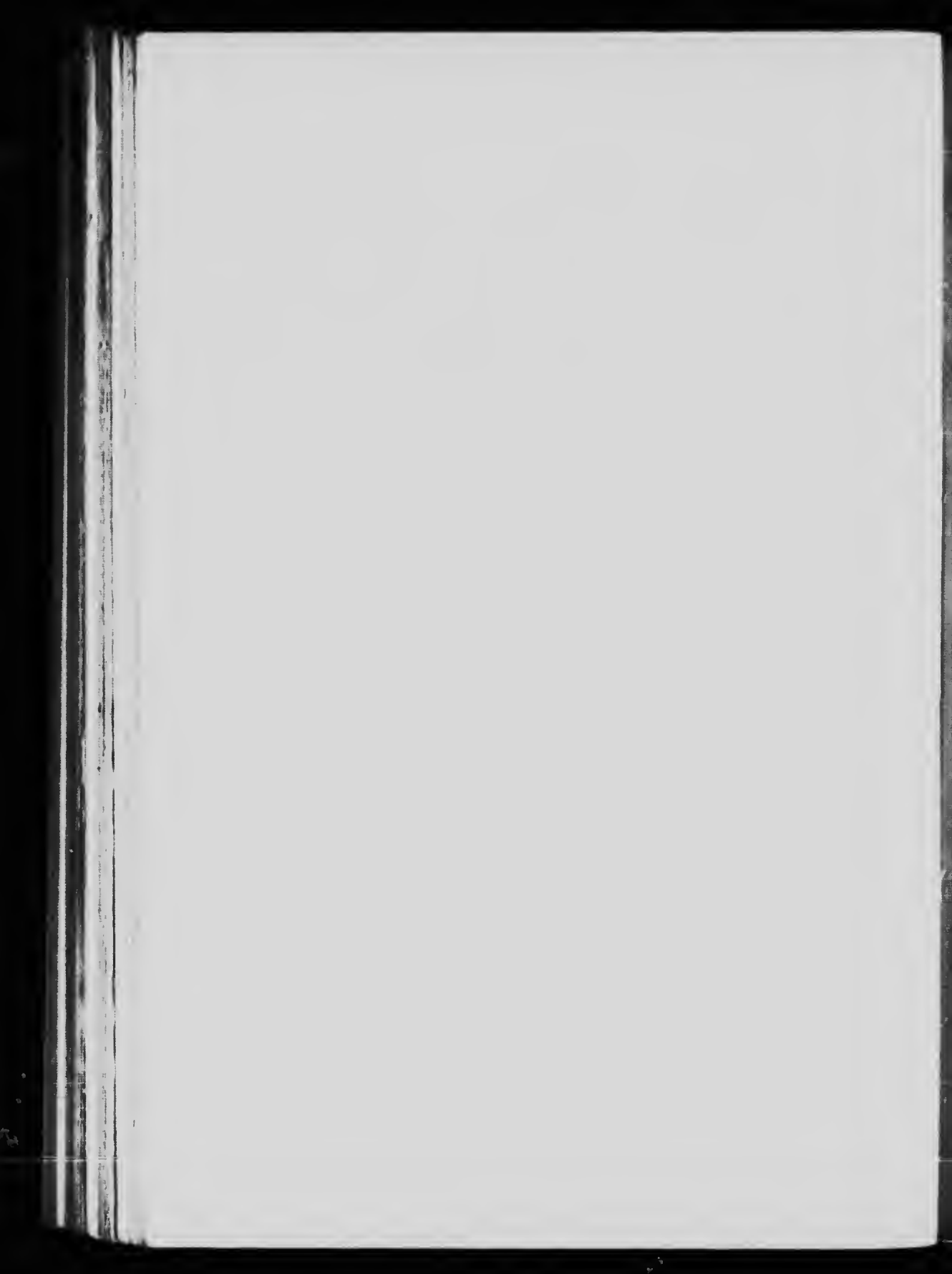
The fishermen themselves, who had all the trouble and danger of obtaining fish, did not benefit, and were exceedingly poor. It was the middlemen, the smack-owners, and the salesmen who made large fortunes. The French and Dutch fisheries were almost entirely maintained by the English market. The Dutch industry consisted of turbot-fishing, which was managed so much better than the English one that it employed twenty times as many men. The Dutch boats, when full, met together at Gravesend, arranged upon the quantity of fish to be supplied to the London market, and pooled their fish. They then sold their haul to the English fishermen, and divided their profits equally, receiving generally about ten shillings per fish, the English fishermen having to make profit on this in the market. The irony of the whole thing was that the turbot were caught with one particular kind of bait, called Lamprey eels, only to be found in the River Thames. These were caught by fishermen at Richmond, Mortlake, and other places up the river, and sold to the Dutch. Our men were every bit as expert as their rivals; but their fleet was made up of smacks owned by many masters, and it was impossible to make the fishing pay without a great expenditure of capital by individual owners. The French fishery consisted of mackerel and herrings. Here again our men were quite cut out, and their employment seems to have consisted in meeting the French fishing-fleet and buying their catch in bulk for cash.

Mr Howell formulated a plan, which was laid before



THE CUSTOM HOUSE AND BILLINGSGATE.





## London Bridge

Parliament in 1803, to reduce the price of fish and to cripple the French and Dutch fisheries. In reducing the number of Dutch fishermen, he aimed at crippling the Dutch Navy, which in the late wars had been manned in a great measure from the fishing-fleet. If the Bill had passed it would also have advanced the work of the Marine Society by finding employment for great numbers of industrious poor, and training up for the Navy multitudes of destitute and friendless boys ; but the owners of fishing-vessels and others, a wealthy class, used all their influence against it with such success that it was rejected on the second reading by five to three.

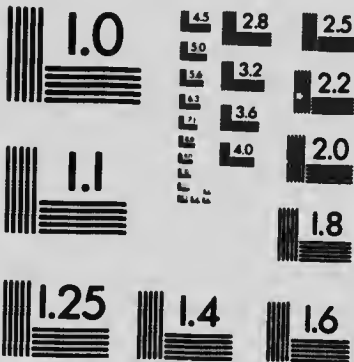
Things are different now, the price of fish being almost nominal ; but it does seem a pity that a scheme that was so much wanted at the time of its proposal should have been knocked on the head through the opposition of those who were the cause of all the evils.

It is a relief to slip through from the noisy street into the comparative quiet of Custom House Quay, where the pigeons are circling overhead. The old Custom House, like so many other buildings, was destroyed by fire. The present one, designed by Sir Robert Smirke, was opened in 1817. It is a very handsome building, with fine columns on the front ; the long terrace so close to all the traffic is a great attraction.



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## CHAPTER V

### THE TOWER AND TOWER BRIDGE

LETTING go our warps,  
we sheer into the tide  
and drop down to the  
Surrey side to make a  
sketch of the Tower, the  
outer walls of which stand

mellowed and softened, like some old face that the hand of time has passed gently over. The great White Keep rising in the middle has the air of a woman past her prime. It is pointed and built up to represent youth, and is hard and cold.

This terrible Tower—that levelled all distinctions with axe and block, little ease and oubliettes, torture and chains, the prison-house and grave of hundreds disappearing into the shadowy past—is a monument that has no rivals among palaces and prisons. It is said to go back to a period long before our history took shape. A Roman wall can even now be traced near some parts of the ditch, and a Tower is mentioned in



THE GREY KEEP OF THE TOWER





## The Tower and Tower Bridge

the *Saxon Chronicle* ; but the buildings, as we see them, were begun by William the Conqueror. They consist of the Inner Ward, containing the Keep, the Royal galleries and rooms, the Mint, the Jewel-house, the Wardrobe, the Queen's Garden, St Peter's Church, the open Green, the Constable Tower, the Brick Tower, and the Great Hall and Lieutenant's House. This ward, flanked and covered by twelve strong works, built on the wall and forming part of it, was planned and partly constructed by Gundolph, the Monk of Bec, who in return for his exile was made Bishop of Rochester. Some hundred and fifty years after, Henry the Third, surnamed the Builder, added the Outer Ward, containing some lanes and streets below the wall and works which overlooked the wharf. The Water or Traitor's Gate, commanding the only outlet from the Tower into the Thames ; the Middle, Byeward, Cradle, and Well Towers ; also the Galleyman and Irongate Towers, Brass Mount, Legge Mount, and the covered ways, backed by the newer and taller dull red-brick buildings that lend a warmth to the old grey stone, all stand along the pleasant wharf with the river gliding by. Later, Edward the First rebuilt the original church of St Peter's, which had fallen into decay ; and, though the chapel has suffered much, the shell remains a fine piece of Norman work.

This great Tower was not only the court and miserable prison of our kings and princes from Norman times to Henry of Richmond, but was also the seat of learning and of the Government, the Court of King's

## London to the Nore

Bench, and here was His Majesty's private block. In the Outer Ward stood the Court of Common Pleas. Into this ward the Commons had always claimed a right of entering. Indeed, they had free access, guarded by possession of the outer gates and towers.

If the spirits of the departed ever walk the earth, surely this wicked twelve acres, saturated with blood and tears, must be crowded with the ghosts of those who suffered. Every corner has its victim. One has but to close one's eyes to imagine the phantom train. On and on they pass, rolling forward from age to age, till the shades take form; and Maud the Fair again walks this earth, her sweet face uplifted to the round turret of the Keep, where she had watched for the succour that never came from the hateful advances of John the King, with pleasure taking poison rather than shame. Brave Wallace comes next, the wraith of a mighty man, borne up by courage and strength, ready to meet his doom with gleaming, unflinching eyes. The crouching shade of brutal Clarence, with bent head, shifts his gaze from side to side uneasily as an unseen hand draws him to the Bowyer Tower, to enact again the drowning of his body in the vat of Malmsey wine. Henry, his head bowed as if in prayer, wends his way to finish his devotions in the small chapel of the Lanthorne Tower, which had been so rudely disturbed by the knife of the assassin. Then the moon clears from the clouds and shines tenderly on the sweet pair emerging from the Bloody Tower. A woman, tall and thin, awaits them on the threshold

## The Tower and Tower Bridge

with a smile struggling through her tears. Here they come—two sweet boys with so great a love for this their mother that death lost its terror, and, taking each a hand, they pass together into the shadows. Then one sees the Maid of Kent in her nun's habit as in her shroud, her crazy eyes wandering in perplexity from face to face of her priestly companions, as though asking what has led her here to revisit her prison, that Cold Harbour of the gateway, jestingly called the Nun's Bower. Cardinal Fisher, old and bent, grasps the arm of Father Bocking, and shivers as his sunken gaze is raised to the cold strong-room of the Belfry. Here is sweet Anne Boleyn, who sought to live but was condemned to die so young. The wind wails and moans as Salisbury's wife rushes by, her grey hair flying loose, while the phantom headsman aims blows at her distracted head. From Beauchamp's Tower pours forth a train of great noblemen. The good Lord Cobham leads the band. An age passes ; and the restless spirits of the Dudleys appear, and, pacing his cell, young Guildford, only seventeen and about to die, thinks of his queen and with point of knife cuts "Jane" upon the wall. His brothers are with him—Warwick, Ambrose, Robert, Henry—all good to look upon, Warwick alone out of his teens. Comes gentle Jane, the nine-days queen, from the Deputies' House, so frail and wan in the moonlight. To the Beauchamp Tower she wends her way to meet her lord. From Tower and gate, Sir Thomas Wyatt, with Rudstone, Fane, and Culpepper, join the train ; and



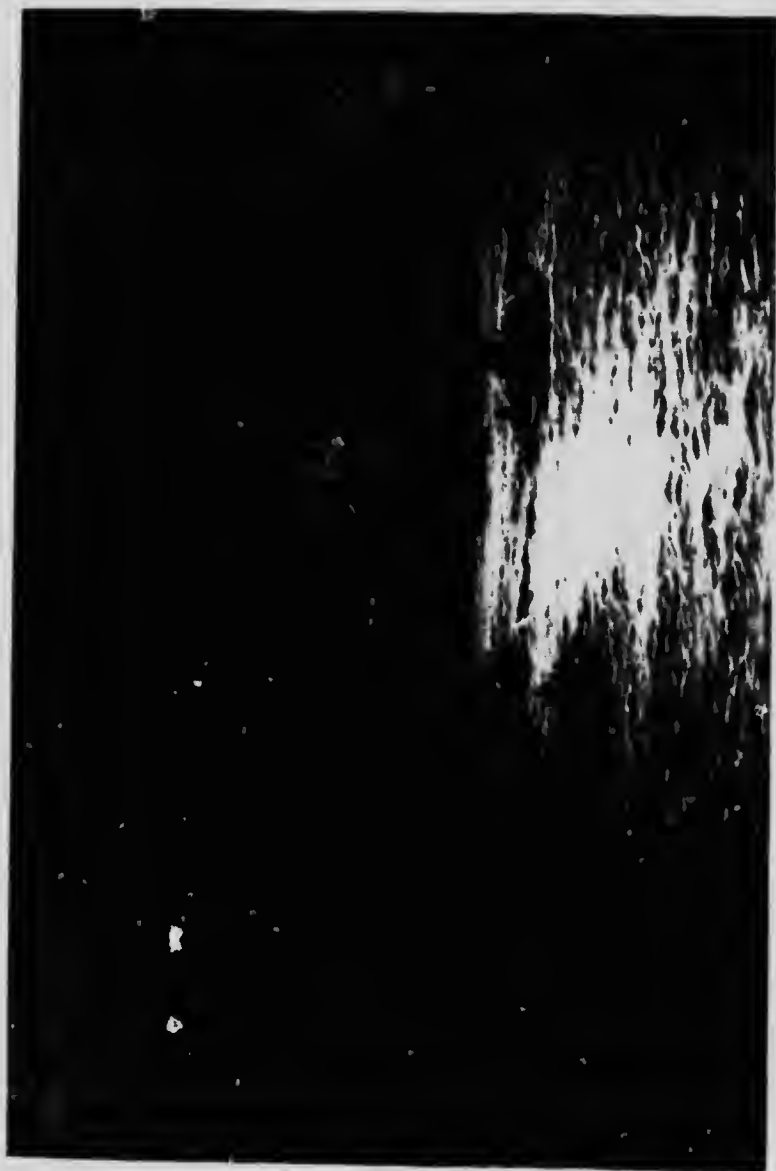
## London to the Nore

into the Keep and Chapel of John, where Northumberland mumbles and tells his beads in hopes that this will save his head, come Buckingham, Strafford, David Bruce, Surrey, Prince Charles of France, Courtney, Guy Fawkes, Princess Margaret, Victoria's kin. Tall and bronzed by a tropical sun, Sir Walter Raleigh paces the terrace alone, apparelled, as became such a figure, in costliest stuff of richest colour, his whole attire from cap to shoe ablaze with gems. This wraith stands clearly beyond all others. Poet, student, courtier, soldier, sailor, orator, historian, statesman, doctor, all in one, he smilingly faces death. The dream changes, and to my horror I find myself leading Ridley and Latimer to a great broad place in Oxford, where stands a huge pile of fagots. I congratulate myself that they seem quite unmoved and walk with dignity into the fire. I see nothing but a throng of upturned faces watching (they say) to see the spirits of these two priests fly heavenward as the fire flares up. Latimer calls out in a mighty voice, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley; play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace——!"

I cannot hear more, for a shriek as of a spirit in pain sounds close beside me. I rouse up with a great start, my heart beating violently, only to find a tug that has just pulled her steam-whistle and is bringing up alongside of us. A thick volume slides off my knees to the deck, and I realise that I have had forty winks in company of Hepworth Dixon, during which his many characters have danced on the stage of fancy.



TOWER BRIDGE, WITH THE BASCULES UP FOR THE  
PASSAGE OF SHIPS





## The Tower and Tower Bridge

Night has fallen, and the moon rides high ; the dew lies thick on the deck. The Tower is only just visible against the deep grey-blue of the sky, and from hundreds of casements long beams of light are flashing. The whole river twinkles with red and green and white, bringing vividly to mind the rhymes of the rule of the road.

“ Green to green and red to red—  
Perfect safety ; go ahead.”

“ If red to starboard should appear,  
It is your duty to keep clear :  
Act as judgment says is proper,  
Port or starboard, back or stop her.”

“ But if upon your port is seen  
A steamer's starboard light of green,  
There's not so much for you to do,  
For green to port keeps clear of you.”

Down the middle of the river stretches a path of silver light, and as the drifting barges creep from the darkness they stand out sharp and black against the glitter for a moment. All round, the winches are rattling and groaning, spitting steam in spasmodic jerks ; and now and then, as some upward-bound vessel nears the bridge, the clang of the bell warns the traffic off, and the two great bascules rise grandly, the red lights turning into green.

It was the Queen's weather for the opening of this bridge on June 30, 1894. From Westminster to Blackfriars every inch of space was occupied. The

## London to the Nore

bridges and the Embankment were packed with a dense moving mass of humanity; all the craft up and down the reach had hoisted every stitch of bunting they possessed. The steamships lined the banks in turn. All round them were barges and dumb barges, rubbing and bumping into one another. Never was such a scene as was presented this day on the river. The beautiful blue of the sky was reflected in the water; every wharf was gay with scarlet cloth and flags; hundreds of watermen plied for hire, and were "never in want of a fare"; their boats, laden down to the water's edge, brought off from the shores crowds and crowds of people to the barges and dumb barges, wherever there was a chance of a view. The great towers of the bridge stood high and very white against the sky, fair and clean for this their opening day.

We had come up from the country early; and even then the traffic was suspended every moment for the passage of squadrons and troops of mounted police and soldiers, and people who had taken cabs to the Tower were obliged to get out and walk. Tower Hill was a wonderful sight. Flags waved from every house and corner, from the hill to the bridge. The Grenadiers and the Life Guards were taking up their positions, their accoutrements scintillating and sparkling. Under the trees the band of the Life Guards were collected, and bands of other regiments kept passing to take up positions close by. Great tiers of seats, covered in crimson, had been erected on either side of the approach, and near the bridge awnings stretched across—pale

## The Tower and Tower Bridge

pink and green muslin festooned with long wreaths of pink roses leading from either side to a pavilion in the centre, where stood a prettily-arranged column decorated with flowers at the base and surmounted by a silver cover. Our seats from one side overlooked the platform and down through the bridge, and from the other the approach. The shade of the awning was delightful, and made one pity the Royal personages, whose carriages were drawn up, as they arrived, in the blazing sun, where they had to wait. The seats were filling rapidly, and when a well-known man passed up between the tiers a cheer of recognition was raised.

Of all the notables that passed that day our President, Lord Leighton, in court-dress, his fine face lit up with a slight smile, provoked the greatest outburst of acclamation. The cheer followed him, rippling along as he walked, stately and handsome, to his seat in the pavilion. Troop after troop went by, the sailors passing at the double with their band playing "A Life on the Ocean Wave." The fair clean roadway was seen through the great arch of the nearest tower ; it was lined with troops in scarlet coats. While we were waiting for the procession a shabby-looking man hurried past, shiftily turning his head from side to side, and had nearly arrived at the dais when a mounted policeman galloped up and headed him off. Two more policemen running up caught him by both arms and hurried him away. Now, from afar, came the rumble of a huge roar, gaining and growing as it came towards us, a wave of sound emitted from the throats of a million. It tingled and vibrated



## London to the Nore

every nerve in one's body, this joyous roar of the masses, as on the stroke of twelve the Royal procession began to file down the approach. Mounted police led the way ; then came a dazzling escort of Guards ; the carriage with the great engineer and the Sheriffs ; the City Marshal riding on a splendid charger ; the Lord Mayor in his State coach. These escorted the Royal carriage with our Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duke of York, and Princess Victoria ; followed by the Czar of Russia with his *fiancée*, in a small victoria by themselves. The Duke and Duchess of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, the Duchess of Albany, the Duke of Cambridge, the Duke and Duchess of Teck, the Prince and Princess of Battenberg, passed, too quickly to be recognised, over the bridge to the Surrey shore. The air was filled with plaudits and the National Anthem played by the massed bands.

Thus was the bridge opened for traffic. The cavalcade then returned and alighted at the dais, where the Recorder read an address to the Prince, who then took hold of the two little figures on either side of the silver cover and gently turned the key that set the hydraulic power to work. Everyone craned forward to watch the great bascules rise. It was truly wonderful. Millions of voices rose in a great shout ; the guns boomed ; the church bells clanged ; the ships sounded their sirens, the barges and smaller craft their bells and fog-horns.

H.M.S. *Landrail*, decked from stem to stern with flags, passed through ; she was followed by boats representing the House of Commons, London County

## The Tower and Tower Bridge

Council, Lloyd's, the Watermen's Company, and many other institutions. The Royal party then embarked on the steamer *Palm* and returned to Westminster.

This great gate to our river took just eight years to build—from the time the Prince of Wales began the work, on June 21, 1886. Many plans had been sent in and rejected ; but as the population below the bridge grew and multiplied, and the trade increased, the communication between the two shores had become more and more difficult. Sir Horace Jones first conceived the idea of a large bascule bridge across the Thames ; but his design had an arch which sprang from the piers of the two great towers, and would have proved a source of danger to ships with high masts unless they kept well in the middle. This was the form decided on by the Bridge House Committee when they came to Parliament with a Bill for powers to construct the bridge. The design was very much modified by Sir John Wolfe Barry ; only the principles of Sir Horace Jones were retained. The money for the great undertaking was forthcoming from a fund that was formed as far back as the building of the first London Bridge. The subscriptions, collected from the whole country, not only built the bridge, but also left a surplus. Besides, there were revenues from the chapel on the bridge, and the structure was endowed with lands wherewith to keep it in repair. These, as may be supposed, have now become very valuable, and are known as the Bridge House Estates. With these moneys the Corporation were able to rebuild London Bridge, put up

## London to the Nore

another at Blackfriars, buy and free from toll Southwark Bridge, and provide one million eight hundred thousand pounds to defray the cost of this last and greatest of City bridges, the opening span of which is two hundred feet wide, with a height of one hundred and thirty-five feet above Trinity high water. When the ponderous bascules are closed there is still twenty-nine feet clear. Each granite pier is one hundred and thirty-five feet long and seventy feet wide, being joined to the land by side-spans of two hundred and seventy feet. The bridge has been made to resemble as much as possible the architecture of the Tower.

We had just turned out the light in the saloon, and retired to our cabins, when Harold ran past our door, calling out, "I fancy someone is in the water : there is something scratching and bumping alongside aft !" In a moment we were on deck, peering over the side into the black water gliding past at a tremendous pace, and right under the quarter davits we could just make out something flopping up and down. Harold, hanging on to the fall, lowered himself away, and caught hold of a poor little gasping lump of fur which, under the light, resc'ved itself into a small white terrier. "Poor little devil !" said Harold. "Why, I heard the scratching some time ago. I wonder how he managed to stem the tide ?" The dog was very limp, and could hardly lap the hot milk with a little brandy that we gave him. Soon we rolled him up in a piece of flannel and passed him into the forecastle.



## CHAPTER VI

### TOWER BRIDGE TO MILLWALL

**T. C.** (or "Thames Conservancy," as we have named him) is helping the men to scrub decks early this morning. He is evidently a character, and well able to look after himself. He has one most knowing eye, which gleams out of a black dab on the side of his face, while the other glances meekly up from out of a pink rim. (It did not take us very long to find that this weak eye was no criterion to any mischief he was up to; if you happened to be on the other side of him you had quite a different prospect.) We have the Princess on deck, and he is proving a source of pleasure and entertainment to her as

## London to the Nore

he makes wild dashes after the sparrows that flit about on the closely packed coal-barges. He has evidently been used to this exercise, and it is probable that it was by one of his wild leaps that he landed himself in the river.

I am afraid, if we stay much longer up here, there will be no paint left on our sides at all. Our pale grey is scored and scraped, bumped and dented ; there are streaks of tar and lines of red lead where the variously coloured craft have driven past us. Thinking that a change to a quieter berth might be an improvement, we slip our warps and run away down the river under the top-sail and fore-sail. It is nearly low water, and there are only a few barges coming down before the wind. This is the least busy hour in the day. We shall have plenty of time to look about us as we sail. There are steamers in tiers two-deep, and now and then three-deep, on both sides of the waterway ; and each is surrounded by quite a fleet of barges loading or unloading. The steam-winches are thumping and puffing ; great bales rise high into the air from dusty holds, and then, swinging sideways, drop neatly into the clustered dumb craft alongside, which fall astern as soon as they are full. The bargees stand and chat or tend their charges. If the freight comes down in the right place, there is always time for a jest or a quaint remark to the passing steamer, often put in old-world Anglo-Saxon. Besides the craft at the buoys, there are many others alongside the wharfs, where the hydraulic

## Tower Bridge to Millwall

or electric cranes wave their arms, and the tubs and cases go aloft to the many stories of the great warehouses.

A writer of old time says : "It is impossible for words to describe the traffick carried on below London Bridge. Where every tide produceth a world of wonders, and no sooner removeth one fleet to the several parts of the known world, but it bringeth in another freight of merchandise. I may also truly add how strong it is by its naval forces in its own defence, as well as thereby terrible abroad." What would he say now? As we reach the Tower Bridge the bascules are raised to allow a fish-carrier to steam through. Slipping into his wake, we follow, the great jaws closing again with a snap. Just off the Tower a screw-steamer is bringing a crowd of aliens—Teutonic and Polish, long-haired, beetle-browed, sallow, fair, and stolid. They lean over the rail and gaze at the promised land.

Irongate Wharf—called after one of the Tower entrances—is between the bridge and the gates to Saint Katherine's Dock, which is surrounded by tall warehouses, so that only the masts of the ships can be seen from the river. These docks have the trade in wine and brandy, tobacco, and rice, and were for years rivals to the East and West India Docks. The vaults cover acres ; the quays are piled with great new wine-barrels, currants, slates, corks, and Spanish onions ; and in one corner stands the Queen's pipe, where all the contraband tobacco seized is burnt. We run on

## London to the Nore

past Hermitage Wharf, Shad Thames, St Saviour's Dock, Cherry Garden Pier, and Wapping Old Stairs, which is just below the south entrance to the London Docks. The celebrated Thames Tunnel, which was looked upon as a great wonder when Brunel built it, passes under the river between Rotherhithe and Wapping, and is now used by the East London Railway, whose line runs through it.

On an elbow of what was once salt marsh between Rotherhithe and Deptford the Surrey Commercial Docks have been excavated—a maze of ponds and basins—where the sweet-scented spruce and fir is landed from Norwegian, Swedish, or Canadian barks and brigs, and is piled in great stacks for miles along the quays. At Rotherhithe the river makes a bend to the north-east, and we jibe the top-sail over as Limehouse comes into sight at the end of the Lower Pool. On the left, Wapping Wall—now all covered with tall warehouses—slips past us, and the gates leading to Shadwell Basin; and here lie the fire-floats, with steam up, ready to slip their moorings and be off at a moment's notice. On the south bank are the Globe Stairs and many dry-docks, where the sailing ships stand high above us in all sorts of picturesque disarray—top-masts housed, yards a-cockbill, and all the standing rigging in bights.

Ratcliff is next to Shadwell. The wharfs become less busy, and the river is clearer of large craft. These locks we are just coming to are the entrance of the





ROTHERLITHE





## Tower Bridge to Millwall

Limehouse Basin of the Regent's Canal, which here starts on its winding course round North London, and goes through tunnels and cuttings until, joining the Grand Junction, it puts the Thames into communication with Birmingham and the Black Country. The locks are made just large enough to take one barge or two monkey-boats : so these latter generally travel in pairs, to save the locks from opening twice. Just below is "Lime'us' Cut" (as it is called hereabout), which runs in a straight line through the flat district north of Poplar, and joins the Lea at Bromley. Here are barges anchored, many of them with masts lowered still, just as they have sailed down, under their bridge-sails—that is, a jury rig consisting of a light short mast on which a square-headed lug is set, the whole being lowered down over the sea-going mast when the bridge is not a lofty one. The stack-barge, when bound up to Waterloo or Pimlico, sets his lug on the topped-up bowsprit, and this gives him a very rakish air. The tide is almost done as we run round the stern of a swim-headed old stumpy, and let our anchor go close to the shore.

Limehouse, for a short part of its frontage, has the very quaintest group of houses to be found up or down the river. One's eye is caught by the brilliant patch of colour coming between great new warehouses—a piece of old London left behind on the bank. The houses are small, very narrow, and squeezed tight against one another, each painted in a bright contrasting colour ; they have little balconies full of flowers, old-

## London to the Nore

world bow-windows, and odd storage places below. The harbour-master's house is a complete bow. From the top of more than one flies the family washing. The barge-builder, too, pulls the craft he is at work on right into the house, and one can see the brightly painted stern sticking out high above the water. Several of Whistler's best etchings immortalise this corner. Alongside is a wharf where the barges unload hay and load dust, and just below is Limehouse Dock—not a basin with gates and locks, but the old-fashioned cut into the bank where the craft could be unloaded out of the traffic. Of this character was the old Execution Dock at Wapping, for which I have hunted high and low without finding its exact position. Ever since the days of Henry the Sixth this had been the place of execution for pirates, and sometimes for sailors convicted of crimes at sea. It seems to have been usual to hang them at low-water mark, and leave the bodies till three tides had flowed over them. In 1735 Williams the pirate was hanged here, and afterwards in chains at Bugsby's Hole; and in 1738, on December 20, one James Buchanan, condemned for the murder of Mr Smith, mate of the Indiaman *Royal Guardian*, was dragged on a hurdle from Newgate to Execution Dock in Wapping to suffer; but before he had hung five minutes a gang of sailors cut the rope and carried him off alive in triumph down to the water. He afterwards escaped to France. In *Fortunes by Land and Sea*, an old play of the Shakespearean era, one of the scenes is laid at Execution Dock, to which



LIMEHOUSE, A BIT OF VANISHING LONDON







## Tower Bridge to Millwall

two pirates are brought to be hanged. One of them says—

“How many captains that have aw'd the seas  
Shall fall on this unfortunate piece of land ?  
Some that commanded islands ; some to whom  
The Indian mines paid tribute, the Turk railed.  
But now our sun is setting, night comes on ;  
The watery wilderness o'er which we reigned  
Proves in our ruins peaceful merchants trade,  
Fearless abroad as in the river's mouth,  
As free as in the harbour. Then, fair Thames,  
Queen of fresh water, famous thro' the world,  
And not the least thro' us, whose double tides  
Must overflow our bodies ; and, being dead,  
May thy clear waves our scandals wash away,  
But keep our valours living.”

As the tide continues to flow, more and more craft come crowding up, pushing their way among the drifting dumb barges. Here a great screw, piled up with timber and listing badly to port, drives slowly by, flying the blue flag and yellow cross of Sweden ; next a red and black fruit steamer dashes past, whistling impatiently. Many tugs with long winding tows of coal-lighters thread their tortuous courses. Now comes a black tramp with a blue and white funnel, evidently looking for a space of open water in which to swing round head to tide. She has put her helm hard over, and her anchor is let go with a splash ; the chain runs smoking and crashing out of the hawse-pipe.

## London to the Nore

Away drifts the tramp up-stream. Her cable tautens for a moment, and then hangs limp as more chain comes rattling out ; then it again rises, dripping from the river, straight as a bar when the strain of the deep-laden steamer, now nearly broadside-on across the tide, comes fairly on to the anchor, dragging it slowly up-stream. Ting ! goes the engine-room telegraph, and a mass of foam is churned up as the throbbing blades turn astern. What a length she looks right across the fairway ! What a time it seems to take to get her unwilling bulk head to tide ! The small fry are pouring up all the while on the rushing current. Some of the sailing barges let go their anchors, and drive up stern-first into berths, as though in imitation of the big tramp, now slowly disappearing round the bend, still dragging her unwilling anchor through the mud and making a great commotion with her screw. Now there comes a white-funnelled tug with a queer old Norwegian bark, hogged and twisted out of shape, and piled high above her bulwarks with the sweet-scented pine and spruce. In between her main and mizzen masts, which lean at different angles in a drunken fashion, is a green windmill spinning gaily, to pump the water which finds its way through the yawning seams. The many cargoes she has carried have spoilt her figure, and her sheer is bent and hogged. The tug slues her gently round with a turn astern here and a pull ahead there ; just as though she were some dainty, fragile f bric, coaxes her quietly into the yawning entrance of the

## Tower Bridge to Millwall

Regent's Canal Basin, where we can see her three masts over the tiles and chimney-pots as the crew warp her up the dock.

Two monkey-boats, lashed together, gay in bright patterns of red, white, and emerald green, drift past us in charge of a Thames waterman. The sunburnt women are evidently very much out of their element in the crush of lighters and tugs and the tumbling swell of the paddle-boats. The bargees seem to take a fiendish delight in scaring them by calling out all sorts of confusing warnings—"Look out! there's a wheelbarrow sunk there!" or, "Mind! you'll be into something directly." I dare say they long for the old white horse and the quiet waters of the Grand Junction Canal.

Over on the Rotherhithe bank are the Guernsey schooners, shooting broken granite into dumb barges alongside, with a rattle that can be heard far away downstream. They always seem to start unloading at one end. Some have their noses flung high into the air, and others their counters, reminding us of rocking-horses in a toyshop.

The tide is still flowing; but the outward-bound steamers are coming down against it in twos and threes. Some fly the red world on a white ground of the General Steam; others the red and white pennant of the Netherlands Company. Many have big rope fenders artfully slung across their stems close to the water, so that they can push their way through the drifting dumb craft when there is no lane of open water to steer for.

## London to the Nore

It is wonderful to watch the quiet way in which the bargee keeps his swim-headed ungainly vessel always in the best of the tide with the least possible amount of labour. Each stroke of his long bending oars means many different motions. First he walks three steps forward with both hands below his knees and his back bent ; then, dropping his blades in the water and his feet upon the combing of the hatches, he gets a firm hold and begins to pull in little jerks, slowly coming more and more back, until his body is nearly horizontal in a mighty tug. Then, stepping back on to the deck, he gives another pull ; then another step ; and at last, lowering his hands again, takes three steps forward to the combing. Often he takes his oar round to the bollards at the bow, and, sticking it out right ahead, alters the course by a stroke or two at right angles. Then if the wind is fair enough to blow him along, he cleverly jumps his oar out of the rowlock with a little jerk, and, walking right aft with it and using the stern-post as a fulcrum, steers his tarry craft before the gale. It is quite a study to see him coaxing the lumbering thing to drive just near enough to a tier to allow him to jump out on to the deck of one of the barges, snatch a turn with his great warp, stopping his own craft dead, and giving her a sheer against the rushing current ; then he casts off, steps aboard again, and shoots right out into the stream, just as it were the easiest thing in the world. He has a flow of animal spirits, many quaint fancies, and a power of expressing his emotions in language which is pithy. Repartee

## Tower Bridge to Millwall

is his very strongest point ; at this he beats a cabman hollow.

There is a great clanking of windlasses as the sailing vessels round us begin to shorten in their chains and sheet home their top-sails. We think it would be a good idea to start too, as this may be an uneasy berth in the night, with the wind blowing against the tide : so, rousing up the crew, we ship the windlass handles and heave round with the best of them, while the Skipper hoists the top-sail and slacks away the weather-vang. "Break it right out !" he calls, and walks aft with the main-sheet block, which is hooked in the traveller. The brails are let go, and the heavy sail is sheeted home, still full of wrinkles and creases. Soon the anchor is hove right up to the stem ; and we run gently down against the still flowing tide, crowded with small craft, all making desperate efforts to get up to the City before high water. The plash of oars is heard everywhere ; the stumpies and top-sail barges are making very short tacks just where the current is strongest. We, with the little fleet just started, creep along next the shore, keeping inside the big tier of sailing vessels by the entrance to the West India Dock, then hugging the bank, busy with the clang of shipwrights' and engineers' hammers. Here and there are little cuts and dry-docks in which traders of all kinds lie for repair. Over the land is a forest of masts and spars, where the sugar ships and five-masters lie broadside to broadside on the three hundred acres of the West India Docks. Even

## London to the Nore

the streets have names suggestive of the islands where the sun shines on the glistening coral and the sea is always blue. Cuba Street and Havannah Street, black and grimy though they be, bring recollections of the palm-trees.



Cornish Wharf

## CHAPTER VII

### MILLWALL TO GREENWICH



MILLWALL, except for a little Roman Catholic church close down by the bustling river, is a long line of wharfs and workshops. Millwall Dock, in the shape of an enormous letter L, covers a hundred acres cut out of the marsh of the Isle of Dogs—so called from the hounds that the King

used to keep across the water when Greenwich was a royal palace. Over on the Surrey side is quite a fleet of Red Cross steamers. There is a covered way leading down to a jetty where the infectious cases can be put afloat and run down to the hospital ships in Long Reach. The deck-houses on the smart little paddle-boats are crowded with ventilators, and we catch a glimpse of neat



## London to the Nore

white caps and aprons as we sail by. Below is the Royal Victualling Yard, where the biscuits are baked, cattle converted into salt beef, and chocolate is made ; and there are mustard and pepper mills,—all for the Navy. Next comes the old dockyard, where Elizabeth came to greet Drake on his arrival in the *Golden Hind* from his great voyage round the world, which had taken two years and ten months ; also where, after partaking of a banquet which he had prepared on board for her, the Queen dubbed him Sir Francis and called him her knight of the seas. The ship was kept as a show for a hundred years, when it was broken up ; and Charles the Second gave a chair made out of the wood to the University of Oxford. In the reign of James the First, who had granted fresh letters patent to the East India Company for the whole of the trade of the East, the adventurers began to build ships of their own, laying down the two largest in the realm in a dock rented here. For the launching of these two ships, the King, the Queen, and young Prince Henry came down in the Royal barge, and christened them the *Trades' Increases* and the *Peppercorn*. "There was a mighty banquet, at which the dishes were of the then priceless chinaware, and the King graciously called the governor, Sir Thomas Symthe, to him, and hung a great gold chain and medal about his neck."

In 1662 the Duke of York visited some of Evelyn's ground about a project for a dock for ships to be moored in. This was laid aside as a fancy of Sir Nicholas Crisp ; but afterwards, in 1696, it led to the

## Millwall to Greenwich

Commercial Docks, the first built on the Thames. These were rebuilt in 1817, and now cover three hundred and thirty acres of land and water.

The year after the Dutch had sailed up the Medway and wrought havoc among our ships, a goodly vessel, the *Charles*, carrying one hundred and ten brass cannon, was launched at Deptford. She had been built by old Shish, who is described as a plain honest carpenter, master builder of this dock. Although he could give very little account of his art, and was hardly capable of reading, he was the best shipbuilder of his time—one for whom Commissioner Pett called loudly after the disaster at Chatham. In South Kensington Museum there is a splendid model of this same *Royal Charles*, and anyone can see for himself what an eye for beautiful form the illiterate old shipwright possessed. His family had been carpenters in the yard for more than a hundred years. He was born in the year of the Gunpowder Plot, and died on May 13, 1680. His coffin he had lying by him many years, evidently to get used to it: he had a habit of rising in the night to pray, choosing the coffin to kneel in.

Though shipbuilding ceased in 1869, and a portion of the yard was sold,—it is now the cattle market, belonging to the City Corporation,—Deptford can still hold its own in importance and antiquity, having the distribution of immense quantities of stores to the other yards and to the Navy.

The ancient hall of the Trinity Brethren that stood here was pulled down in 1787, and a new building

## London to the Nore

on the north side of Tower Hill was given to them. Originally the Brotherhood, in the reign of Henry the Seventh, was a religious household, having certain duties connected with pilotage; and the new society that was founded in 1512 by Sir Thomas Spert, comptroller of the Navy, evidently came into being after Henry the Eighth had turned out the priests. In 1565 it was given certain rights to maintain beacons and buoys; but it had nothing to do with the light-houses that were owned privately till 1680, when the Brethren gradually purchased these ancient lights and built many new ones. Their purpose was to increase and encourage navigation, and to look after the interest and security of merchantmen.

Deptford was once the seat of the ancient Barons of Mamignot. Walkelin, the son of Gislebert, was Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. According to Lambard, he delivered Dover Castle into the hands of King Stephen, and after the King's death abandoned his charge and fled into Normandy, where he died without issue. The property thus came to the Sayes, receiving the name of Sayes Court, and was afterwards enjoyed by the ancient family of the Evelyns—John Evelyn, "that most ingenious gentleman who has obliged the world with so many learned pieces, now residing upon it."

Shipbuilding was in full swing in the yards that had been established by Henry the Eighth, and must have been of great interest to our fine old Admiral Benbow, who, in 1696, rented Sayes Court for three years after

## Millwall to Greenwich

superintending the blockade of Dunkirk,—but always with the proviso that the garden was to be kept up. He evidently had to give up the Court or sailing, in 1698, for the West Indies, where he compelled the Spaniards to restore several English vessels which they had seized. Evelyn's entry in his *Diary* for January 30 that year runs: "The Czar of Muscovy, being come to England, and having a mind to see the building of ships, hired my house, Sayes Court, and made it his court and palace, new furnished for him by the King." While the Czar was in his house, one of Evelyn's servants writes to his master: "There is a house full of people, and right nasty. The Czar lies next your library, and dines in the parlour next your study. He dines at ten o'clock and six at night; very seldom at home a whole day. Very often in the King's yard, or by water, dressed in several dresses. The King is expected there this day; the best parlour is pretty clean for him to be entertained in; the King pays for all he has." On June 19 Evelyn again goes to Deptford, "to see how miserably the Czar had left his house after three months making it his court. I got Sir Christopher Wren, the King's surveyor, and Mr London, his gardener, to go and estimate the repairs, for which they allowed £150."

One cannot imagine what pleasure the Czar could find in having himself wheeled in a barrow through Evelyn's fine holly-hedges. It was here, too, that, by mere accident, as Evelyn was walking near a poor solitary thatched house, in a field near Sayes Court,

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his curiosity made him look in at the window, and he spied Grinling Gibbons carving the large crucifix after Tintoretto. "I asked if I might enter. He opened the door civilly to me, and I saw him about such a work as for the curiosity of handling, drawing, and studious exactness I never had before seen in all my travels." This same Grinling Gibbons carved the altar-screen in the old church of St Nicholas, as well as a wonderful piece of the Valley of Dry Bones, which has a place on the walls close to Kneller's portrait of Queen Anne. The site of this church is very old, its records going back to the twelfth century, and tradition has it that the tower which has just been repaired, and reopened by the Bishop of Rochester, was once used as a lighthouse to guide vessels up the Thames. Part of the belfry staircase is of Purbeck marble, which had not been used for such a purpose since the reign of Edward the Second. In the church are the monuments of two Armada captains, Fenton and Hawkins; and here also lies Christopher Marlowe, one of the great literary lights of the time of our Virgin Queen.

Some old guns, bearing the date 1649, are still preserved in the yard. They are believed to be those which were given by Evelyn to defend Deptford when the Dutch were in the Medway and the Lower Thames.

It is pleasant to be anchored again in comparatively clear water. The river is as blue as the open sea. We are lying between Greenwich Pier and the Trafalgar Hotel. We can see the great ships near the docks



GREENWICH HOSPITAL







## Millwall to Greenwich

on the farther bank of the river, and alongside us is the beautiful palace of Greenwich. One cannot well imagine a more interesting place to come to on a lovely day like this ; but Londoners do not seem to care for or make use of the river as they did in the old days. It has been impossible to take the Princess on shore up to date ; but to-day we have found a bath-chair, and the lady is lowered most carefully into the dinghy and rowed, with her many willing satellites, to the stairs, up which she is carried, and is wheeled up and down the broad terrace in the sunshine, with the little waves lapping on the clean shingle which goes right down to low water.

Our attention is attracted and held by the obelisks. One is in memory of the brave young Frenchman Bellot, an officer in the French Navy who had permission to join the English expedition, commanded by Captain Kennedy, that went out in search of Sir John Franklin. He endeared himself by his pluck and presence of mind to his English companions, and accompanied a second expedition in 1852, on the same quest. He was overtaken by a storm while making a perilous journey with two comrades across the ice, and was blown through an opening and drowned. The other is in memory of the gallant officers and soldiers of the Royal Marines killed in the Maori rising in New Zealand in 1862-64.

From this we go round the four great blocks of buildings that had proved such a harbour of refuge to the ill-paid, neglected seamen in the time of Charles

## London to the Nore

the Second. In 1865, before the Admiralty Act was passed, empowering the governors to grant the old men a liberal pension in lieu of board and domicile, the houses contained three thousand seamen and five or six thousand out-pensioners. In 1873 the place was formally opened as a Royal Naval College. We have walked round the blocks twice to see if we can make out which are the portions designed by Inigo Jones (carried out by Webb) and which are those of Wren. Charles the Second demolished what remained of the old palace, and rebuilt the west wing of the present Hospital as part of an extensive design which was not carried out ; this is the portion built by Webb. Behind this on the west is the wing built by King William, on the site of the old manor from which Henry the Fourth dated his will in January 1408—where so many events happened to affect our history. Edward the Fourth settled it on his beautiful queen ; and it was here that their son, the poor little prince afterwards murdered in the Tower, was betrothed to Lady Anne Mowbray. In 1491 Henry the Eighth was born in the manor. Here he married Catherine of Aragon, who bore him Mary. Then came Anne Boleyn, to whom Elizabeth was born. Later, the unfortunate Anne was arrested here and taken by water to the Tower, where she was beheaded. To this same place came Anne of Cleves, to be the fourth wife of Henry ; and, years after, here too his only son Edward the Sixth died, though the news was not allowed to be known outside for some days. Elizabeth also exercised her gentle

## Millwall to Greenwich

sway at this spot, and Camden describes it as "the honour of Greenwich" that she lived here.

On the east are the blocks that were built for Queen Mary and Queen Anne, designed by Wren, who gave his services free for the Seamen's Hospital. In the King William range is the painted hall where a hundred years ago the body of Nelson rested before his interment in St Paul's. It is now filled with pictures of his naval victories and many valuable portraits. Through the Hospital garden gate to the south is the old palace of the Queen of Denmark, which she called the house of delight; the Queen of Charles the Martyr finished it, and it now rings with the voices of some thousand boys. Facing the road are high iron railings, through which we can see the lads drilling in squads, all looking fresh, clean, and healthy in their white seamen's suits. In the middle of the quadrangle is the model of a fully rigged ship for their instruction, which will no doubt have to give place to the scientific education for modern warfare.

While we are still watching, the bells of the different churches strike twelve; the boys halt and walk off in different directions. And so to the park with its beautiful avenue of chestnuts and fine elms that Evelyn mentions on March 4, 1664: "Planted the Homefield and Westfield about Sayes Court with elms, being the same yeare that the elms were planted by His Majesty in Greenwich Park." The ups and downs of the park—its green sward, the pretty tame deer, and the beautiful view seen from the rising ground—are delightful.

## London to the Nore

Greenwich is in reality a continuation of Deptford. It was famous so far back as 1011-14 as a harbour taken possession of by the Danes, who tortured and killed the poor Archbishop Alphage of Canterbury on the spot where now stands the church of that name. Later it was famous as a regal seat given by Henry the Fifth to Thomas Beaufort, from whom it passed to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who rebuilt the Manor House, and (Camden says) called it "Placentia." Henry the Seventh very much enlarged it. He added a small house for friar mendicants, and finished the tower that Duke Humphrey had begun on the top of a high hill. Gibson, in a note, remarks that "this is also now quite rased." A royal observatory was set in its place by King Charles the Second, who furnished mathematical instruments fit for astronomical work. There was a deep well for observation of the stars in day-time.

On June 30, 1696, Evelyn met Sir Christopher Wren and a Select Committee of the Commissioners to lay the foundation stone of the Hospital, which he did at five o'clock, after they had dined together, Mr Flamstead, the King's astronomical professor, observing the punctual time by instruments.

From this same spot we now watch the black ball creeping up the staff on the eastern turret; slowly, slowly, it goes; and one somehow expects a gun to go off as it drops on the stroke of one, indicating Greenwich time.

The attractions of the day have been too many, and we shall be late for luncheon: so we make a bee-line

## Millwall to Greenwich

for the pier, hail our boat, and are rowed off, rather tired, but quite satisfied with our morning. During the meal we talk over all we have seen and read, and come to the conclusion that "*Sylvia Evelyn*" was the chief mover in the building of the Hospital for Poor and Disabled Seamen. All through his *Diary* one can read the interest he took in the works—how he collected the money, kept the accounts, supervised the building, and to the end of his life interested himself in the welfare of this good and great undertaking. On February 9, 1705, the year before his death, at the age of eighty-four, he came for the last time to Greenwich Hospital, "where they now began to take in wounded and worn-out seamen, who are exceeding well provided for," and noticed that "the buildings now going on are very magnificent."

We spend the remainder of the afternoon sitting comfortably on deck, each one at his or her own pursuit. Shouldering the Trafalgar Hotel are Corbett's sheds, with boats of all kinds on hire, from which a waterman has pushed off with a baby girl dressed in pink flannelette gravely sitting in the stern hugging a doll. From another direction comes a grubby-looking old man with an ancient boat. She has a great part of her bulwarks torn away, and he has to put a list on her to keep the wounded side out of water. Evidently he is well known. Three or four small boys rush down the shed to meet him; they jump on board with a fine model yacht, which, when put in the water, sails off at a great rate, the old man, with silly old oars not half big

## London to the Nore

enough for the boat, trying to keep pace with her. The children enjoy this thoroughly, and the river is filled with the sound of their laughter as the model shivers for a moment, jibes from one side to the other, and makes a bee-line for the raft. The *King George*, a beautiful three-masted sailing ship, with freshly painted white sides, a pale pink line and bottom, and sails neatly furled on the yards, tows down. Boys' heads are bobbing up and down in the water, their bodies shining, the flesh tint higher in tone than anything else under the sun. The air is soft and warm; loungers and passers-by lean on the railings of the terrace; as soon as one drops off another takes his place—a crowd interested in all that is going on.

The afternoon wears away, the flowing tide ever bringing up more craft. At length the red sun sinks into the haze which hangs over the distant city. There is a brilliant after-glow, and then lights begin to twinkle here and there in the deepening twilight. The steamers pant up the reach with bright mast-head lights and side lights, first green, then red, as they follow the winding of the crowded river. Two excursion boats, with saloons ablaze and red-hot funnels, dash past with a sound of music and dancing feet, leaving columns of thick black smoke and the glistening water lashed into sudden tumult.



## CHAPTER VIII

### GREENWICH TO BELVEDERE

ON the whole we have had a very quiet time off Greenwich Hospital. It is true that a drifting dumb barge did come across our bows in the dark, making us start up thinking that the end of all things was come. The fact was that a shower of rain came on, and the bargee thought it best to stay below out of the wet while his vessel went up-stream broad-side on. He seemed hurt when we pulled after him in our boat and read his number by striking matches under the lee of his square stern. "Man alive, she wouldn't crack an egg!" was what he said. Then the top-sail barge, whose anchor came home—she made rushes at us at odd moments during the watches of the night—was rather a trial. She didn't hit hard, but waited until you were comfortably dozing off and then nudged you. There are times when even a saint might express himself in modern Parliamentary terms.



## London to the Nore

"Let's go," says one ; and accordingly the anchor is weighed and sail made, and in five minutes we are standing away down the reach. The twin domes slip off into the mist, and the tall shafts of the County Council power-works soon follow them. Now we are off Enderby's Wharf, where the submarine cable is being wound off to a great grey telegraph ship moored in the stream. The wire is running all the time from the shore to the cable tanks, where it is coiled neatly down. There are thousands of miles of it. Over on the other bank is Cubitt's Town, a wilderness of mean houses ; and alongside are the torpedo slips of Messrs Yarrow, crowded with the long deadly destroyers in every stage from the embryo, a rusty skeleton of angle-steel, to the plated hull, gaudy with its shining coat of red lead, and, last of all, the finished engine of grim war, the embodiment of speed and power—the grey hawse-holes seem to squint at us in an evil fashion. Among the rest are one or two wide, flat-bottomed river gunboats fit for the shallow waters of the Nile or of the Niger.

Just below are the two lock-gates leading into the West India Docks, which stretch across the neck of marshy land between Poplar and the Isle of Dogs ; and here the Blackwall Tunnel, one thousand two hundred and twenty feet under the river-bed, and six thousand two hundred in actual length, leads through to Bugsby's Marsh, once covered with market gardens, but quite built over now. The gas-holders stand up out of all proportion to their surroundings ; even five-masted

## Greenwich to Belvedere

ships look small beside them. At Blackwall there is another little wedge of old waterside London left standing, jostled by the newer and taller buildings all around. There are bow-windows and wooden balconies overhanging the river just like those we saw at Limehouse. Below are graving-docks and shipyards. Then we come to the terrace by Blackwall Station, and the locks and jetties of the East India Docks, filled for the most part with the red-funnelled, purple-sided Union Castle liners, once known as the Donald Currie boats. What a pity they chose such an ugly colour-scheme! The docks cover only thirty-two acres, and the ships have grown so much of late that it is a tight squeeze to get them in and out. Just as we pass the mouth of the Lea we can look right up the creek where the big battleships tower high above us on the slips of the Thames Ironworks. The clang of the hammers is deafening, and the riveters are crowded like ants among the tall steel frames and on the armoured decks. A faint blue smoke rises here and there in the depths of the mighty structure, and we catch the gleam of red-hot iron being bent and pressed and cut and hammered, uniting the countless members into one harmonious whole.

The Trinity House has a great wharf on the peninsula forming the west bank of Bow Creek. Here are all the relief buoys, newly painted and stored in rows, ready to take their turn of tossing among the waves that dash towards many a fatal flat. The light-vessels are resting quietly on the soft mud after a long spell

## London to the Nore

of restless heaving and dragging at the stout chains and mushroom anchors. What a change after such wild moorings as the Galloper, Outer Gabbard, and Kentish Knock ! Two lighthouses stand on the shore, and the Trinity yachts lie moored out in the stream, smart and dainty as fresh paint and bright brasswork can make them. The heavy derricks forward show that these handsome ships have many duties to perform besides leading the Royal yacht when the King goes a journey. The provisions have to be taken off to the light-ships and the crews relieved. All the buoys have to be seen to. Gas has to be pumped into those which blink at us through the long nights from many a busy waterway or lonely spit. Beacons have to be put up on the shifting sands and half-covered rocks.

The River Lea—or Bow Creek, as it has been called ever since the first stone bridge was built at Stratford at Bow in the reign of Henry the First—has been made navigable right up to Ware and Hartford and the Stort, which joins it at Broxbourne, as far as Bishop Stortford. Now there are locks and a tow-path ; but one wonders what this thickly-populated valley could have been in the days of Alfred. Here is a description of a piratical expedition of the Danes : “ They therefore resolved to sail up the River Thames, and, having penetrated as high as the Lea, they for better security towed their ships up to the town of Ware. There the Danes erected a strong fortification or camp which gave the Londoners great uneasiness. King Alfred attacked the works, but lost heavily, and at last diverted



ATLAS NO. 3





## Greenwich to Belvedere

the current of the Lea into three channels. The Danes, finding themselves cooped up, and their ships rendered useless, broke up camp and marched away, leaving the ships to the Londoners, who floated them down the river and brought the best of them home."

Ships in those days must have been wonderfully shallow. What a sight the rovers must have been towing their dragon-headed galleys up-stream among the daisies and marsh marigolds!

Just below Bow Creek is the entrance to the Victoria Docks, and if you follow the edge of the quay you can walk nearly three miles alongside these and the Albert Docks—as far as Gallion's Reach at the eastern gates. There are ships of all sorts—P. and O.'s, Shaw Savilles, White Stars, British Indias, telegraph ships, and sailing craft.

Lower down are the chemical works. They give off a pungent smell which catches you in the throat. Then come stores of Peruvian guano. Dundee marmalade scents the air, and the great gasworks on Lea Ness pours out a savour all its own.

In spite of the unpromising environs, there is a grand view down the reach, crowded with tier after tier of coal-barges. Charlton stands up beyond the *Atlas* derricks, and Shooter's Hill cuts the sky-line, with Woolwich Church and the Military College rising out of the smoke. There is something rather impressive in such a tremendous number of coal-laden craft massed together as they are here. We decide to slip in between and anchor close to the



## London to the Nore

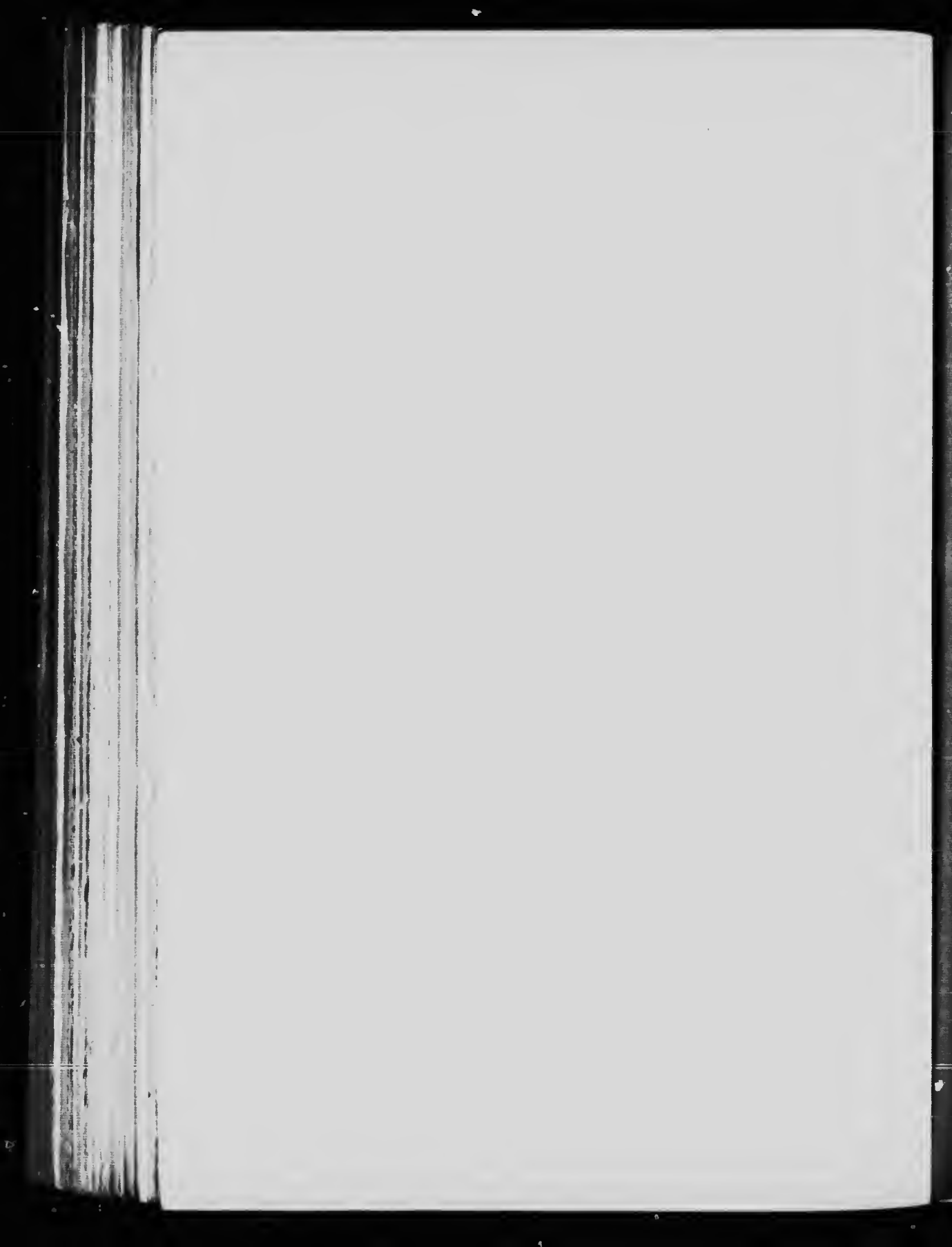
shore. We do not mind the coal-dust: it will wash off.

"Bugsby's Reach" is not a pretty name; yet it seems to suit this stretch of water. We are anchored right inside a huge tier of barges. This was needful for the drawing; but we shall emerge black. A man calls out from a tug, "I say, old 'un, you have picked out a funny place to lie. You know them tiers takes a big sweep when they comes round at low water." We know all about this, and have arranged to be out of it before the tier swings. Outside us is moored a large derrick, *Atlas* No. 3. A derrick, by the way, is a floating pontoon, with ten or twelve cranes on board, the ever-moving hydraulic arms of which unload the colliers that lie alongside by dropping into their holds a giant claw which grabs a great handful of coal that is swung into the air and shot down into the dumb barges on the other side. As soon as one lot is full another takes its place. Tugs lay hold of them, and tow them away to the different tiers, which lie one above the other all up the reach as far as Blackwall Point—so that one looks over acres of dumb barges. The whole work is being carried on in a cloud of black dust that subdues the light as it rises into the sky and falls again as a pall on all and sundry. From the lee-side of the derrick serpentine lines of thick black coal-dust drift upon the ebbing tide; and now and then, when the wind shifts, the cloud of dust comes our way, falling as insensibly as the dew, and penetrates every cranny. Inside, again, are the repairing sheds, and everywhere is the black diamond



BREAKING-UP OF THE "HANNIBAL" AND THE "DEKE  
OF WELLINGTON"





## Greenwich to Belvedere

of the great Cory firm. As the tide slacks the great tier heaves uneasily ; but the tug belonging to it evidently does not think its way of turning is the right one. With much puffing and straining, the barges are shouldered round, and from their midst come dreadful groans and creakings.

Just below is Castle's ship-breaking wharf, where so many of our wooden walls have found their last moorings. Charley Napier's famous flagship, *The Duke of Wellington*, is here—a mere husk of a ship. The graceful sheer of her lines of ports has drooped away ; and her bow, from which the figure-head has been cut, grins noseless like a skull. All round the poop her ribs stand naked to the sky ; busy hands are driving out the copper bolts ; the drear work of destruction is going on. The heavy guns booming at the practice butts on Plumstead Marshes might well be minute guns for the passing of these veterans. "Now, sir, I consider that the handsomest ship in the British Navy !" said an old salt, years ago, as he rowed us past her newly painted sides ; and one can picture her the central object of the great review at Spithead when Queen Victoria inspected her fleet before it started for the Baltic during the Crimean War of 1854, or, later, sailing out of Yarmouth Roads with the famous signal that took not only her mast-head and gaff, but also her top-sail and lower yards, to display the whole of it. Alongside is the handsome old *Hannibal* ; and ahead of her is the battleship *Edgar*, broken down to her lower deck, her figure-head still bearing its supercilious smile,

## London to the Nore

thrusting its chin out over the mud, while every stroke of the hammer sends great clouds of powdered wood into the air. Below, on the water-edge, the men are tearing away the copper sheathing; and when all is done there will be but a small layer more on the top of the huge timber-stack, which is constantly growing on the river-bank.

Below is the turret ship *Ajax*, now a shapeless mass of scrap iron.

The tide is just beginning to ebb as we heave the anchor up and, rowing a warp away to one of the outer coal-barges, work out of the crush into the more open river, where we can sheet aft the main-sail and hoist the top-sail. All the gear is covered with thick blacks and coal-dust, and where the coils of rope have been lying on the deck are neat clean patterns that seem stencilled. The chain is covered with thick mud; so is the windlass; everything is. The wind is ahead; and we stand over towards Silvertown, where the great cream-coloured cable-ships are moored stem and stern. There is no mistaking a telegraph vessel. She always has a big pair of sheaves forward and aft, through which the cable runs out or is hove in; all the deck is crowded with strange gear and great bright-coloured buoys. Here we tack and stand over towards Woolwich Dockyard, where the *Great Harry*, *The Sovereign of the Seas*, the ill-fated *Royal George*, and many famous fighting ships were built. Men-o'-war are no longer laid down here; the mile of buildings, slips, and basins is silent. The great shed over No 5 slip was taken down and

## Greenwich to Belvedere

re-erected at Chatham. Quite a fleet of barges are beating down with us—some with red sails, some with yellow, some all black with the white horse of Kent dancing over the word INVICTA—some built of steel, some of wood, some with swim-heads, and some with stems—young and old, fast and slow, flying light or decks awash. Tack and tack, we work our way on the rushing weather-going tide. As we fetch over to the Essex shore, the *Free Ferry*, a black, flat steamer, almost round, her upper-deck crowded with carts and vans—the horses stare wildly at the tumbling waves—pushes off into the stream, making for the landing-place. The high raised platform which runs for nearly three-quarters of her length, and the funnels stuck in each end of her, are characteristic. Here are stack-barges from distant Maldon or the Colne, piled half-mast-high with straw and hay, waiting for the flood-tide to bear them up through the bridges. It is always a wonder to see these farmers' craft navigating the stormy estuary of our river. The skippers say that, though their barges lie on their sides in a gale, they never turn right over: the straw holds them up when it is in the water. Be that as it may, no vessel of other kind loaded with a straw-stack would beat to windward in a hard blow as these flat-bottomed Essex barges do.

Once more we go about and stand towards the T-pier of the Arsenal. On shore hundreds of tall chimney-shafts belch black smoke into the leaden sky. In the foundry are furnaces where molten steel, many



## London to the Nore

tons in weight, is poured out like treacle from a spoon, and the long guns are bored and turned just as if they were chessmen: .

From this point the river makes a sharp bend, and as we fetch round the corner by North Woolwich Gardens we catch a glimpse astern of the grimy town with its black church-tower and the square-turreted mass of the Military Academy. On Plumstead Marshes are the proof butts, where the heavy guns are booming; and on the Essex shore, just beyond a small hill piled up from the road-scrappings of the London streets, are the entrance jetties of the Albert Dock, with great locks and red-brick Queen Anne buildings. The dock is three miles long, and runs through to the Victoria Docks. There are sheds the whole way on both sides; hydraulic cranes and lines of railway everywhere. Here lies many a famous passenger ship, each surrounded by its fleet of barges and dumb craft, and the work of loading or discharging goes on unceasingly. The Lascars, in blue and white with a touch of red here and there, steal quietly along in their side-spring boots. Smart stewards are busy with cartloads of table-linen, bright-coloured rugs, table-covers, and blankets. The dock labourers are everywhere pushing their little trucks before them, heavy with merchandise from the ends of the earth. As we sail past the gates open, and we can see up into the lock, crammed with barges, all pressing forward to reach the open river.

This great jetty, the cast-iron pillars of which remind one of Karnak or Baalbec, is the landing-place of coal



THE JETTY, BECTON GAS WORKS





## Greenwich to Belvedere

for Becton Gasworks. The hydraulic cranes load the railway trucks directly from the holds of the colliers ; and the trains run straight into the retort-houses where the grimy toilers are ever feeding the furnaces, which seem to stretch for miles in the smoke and coal-dust. Then, there are purifying-houses and scrubbers ; and when the gas is at last fit for use it is pumped into the gas-holders. There is a perfect avenue of these enormous cylinders—some full and standing their entire height above the ground, others sunk into the well that is dug in the marsh to hold them when empty. Hundreds of sailing barges are loading with the coke and refuse, and busy engines are puffing along everywhere. Now we are on the spot where the ill-fated excursion steamer *Princess Alice* was run down and sunk by a light collier which was coming down Gallion's Reach in the dark.

Standing on, we reach the mouth of Barking Creek, where the sewage of all London north of the Thames runs down, to stand in great reservoirs to be treated chemically, so that the more solid particles sink to the bottom while the effluent water runs into the Thames. A great fleet of tank-steamers carries the solid sewage out to the sand-banks at the mouth of the river. Many of the vessels bear the names of the engineers who carried out the works—Bazalgette and Binnie. They are called County Council yachts by Thames sailor-men and are rather fine vessels, neat and beautifully clean.

Looking up the creek, we can see the old square tower of Barking, once a very important fishing village.

## London to the Nore

The sturdy smacks were famous on the Dogger Bank for their sea-going qualities in the days before steam-trawlers. It does not look much of a yachting centre ; but in the early eighties of the last century the very successful ten-tonner *Buttercup* was built here, and, though old-fashioned salts looked askance at her figure-head and schooner bow, which in those days seemed very strange on a cutter, she carried all before her.

Here the river bends again to the east ; and, standing in close to some chemical-manure works, we tack and make a board towards the powder-hulk, once H.M. Armed Storeship *Thalia*. When she was in the Mediterranean fleet under an admiral who was a devil for sail-drill, her crew, who were composed of all sorts of odds and ends, invariably earned for themselves a sarcastic signal, and at last were sent away to drill their nondescripts into smartness. The unfortunate commander took this very much to heart, and determined that next time *Thalia* should not be last ship. Alack ! the very next time the flagship made the signal "All plain sail," the enthusiasts on the halliards, without waiting for the men aloft to lay out, sent all the yards flying to the mast-heads with the sails still furled. The next signal from the Admiral was, "*Thalia* will not in future drill with the fleet."

For a long way on both banks the ground is low and marshy ; and, as there are very few inhabitants to object, all the trades that make dreadful smells or are dangerous to life are congregated hereabout. Vast piles of bones emit a fetid, mouldy savour. Right





FRIPCOCK'S REACH—THE OLD POWDER-HULK "THALIA"





## Greenwich to Belvedere

to windward of us, at Rainham Creek, are some tall chimney-shafts. I don't know what they make at that awful place ; but even three miles away the sickening reek makes you feel bad. Every time we fetch over to the north shore we get right into the line of it. There is no use in going below ; it fills the whole cabin, every cranny of it ; and the nearer we are the worse it is : so we try to work short boards by the great sewage outfall at Crossness, where there are some more County Council yachts taking in their unsavoury freights.

Dagenham is on the north shore. There was here a great breach in the sea-wall in James the First's time, and the whole valley of the Roding was flooded.

In the reign of Queen Anne the Thames again burst the dyke and laid a thousand acres completely under water. The owners were quite unable to restore the wall, and at last the rush of water in and out of the breach became such a danger to navigation that a tax had to be imposed on all shipping entering the Port of London. A high bank was run all along the exposed front, and the water was drained off by means of sluices ; but no attempt was made to reclaim the lake that had been formed by the scour, and it became a lonely mere where the angler could spend his hours.

About forty years ago a company was formed to build a great dock. A jetty was run out, and the work begun ; but, like a great many other companies, it went smash, and the trusting shareholders were ruined.

At last we have worked to windward of those dread-

## London to the Nore

ful works in Rainham Creek. There are still British guano factories and chemical manures, with here and there little powder-magazines nestling behind the sea-wall ; but as we round the point into Erith Reach we feel we can breathe again. That wooded high land to the south of us is Belvedere, where there is a home for seamen—a harbour of refuge after the storms and buffets of this workaday world. In 1864 a powder-magazine blew up and smashed the windows for miles round—even as far away as distant Camden Town.



## CHAPTER IX

### ERITH

**T**IME was—and that not very long ago—when Erith was a quiet village in the midst of green fields and gardens. The tall spire of the grand old church, half hidden in trees, and the red-tiled cottages here and there among the orchards, were typical of rural Kent. Yachts used to lie off the causeway; the old collier brigs and schooners came with every tide to the quaint little jetties, and took in ballast for the journey north. In strong winds they used to come round Jennings Tree Point nearly on their beam ends, the lee yardarms only just clear of the water. It was a wonder that the skippers managed to handle them when empty: in those days it was not the fashion to send for a steam-tug whenever you wanted to shift to another berth. Time was of less value in the days of the sailing colliers. Great fleets would lie weeks waiting for a fair wind. Even when the north wind did happen to blow, and the old Geordies arrived in the London River, they had still to wait a weary while

## London to the Nore

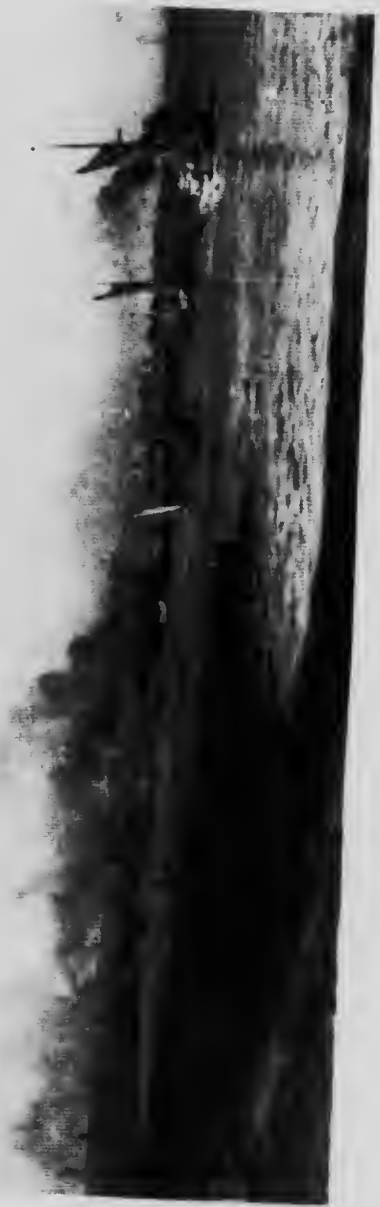
in Long Reach, moored in tiers six- and even eight-deep. There were miles of them, each waiting its turn to start up the crowded waterway—a stern board here, or a long tack there, backing and filling broadside on to the tide, letting go the anchor whenever things began to look serious, breaking it out again and drifting upward as soon as a chance arose. With many a zigzag and a few close shaves, the good old *Harmony* or the *Brotherly Love*—with her fore-mast stepped right in her eyes, and her stout bowsprit innocent of bobstay sticking up with a steve of nearly forty degrees, the thick hemp rigging shining with gas-tar, and the tall single top-sails black with coal-dust—would at last move like a crab to the wharf, where the coal-whippers worked the cargo out by hand—there was less hurry then than now.

No one in the present day would call Erith pretty or rural. It is a place of gun factories, engineering works, and coal-wharfs, where cranes, derricks, and other engines of every shape and kind scoop the coal from the duct, holds of the many screw-steamers. Row upon row of mean little houses, all built after the same ugly pattern, gorgeous gin-palaces and grocery stores, have sprung up everywhere. *Atlas* No. 1, with attendant fleets of coal-lighters and tugs, lies moored in the bight. A hill of dusty ashes, rusty tins, and broken glass has been piled up on the shore; black smoke belches from all the shafts and funnels. The yachts are gone away to Burnham and Port Victoria—all except one or two that, with dirty sails and sooty gear,





ERITH





## Erith

faithfully hang round the old spot, looking like butterflies in winter-time.

Crayfordness is low and marshy. Inside the sea-wall are little galvanised-iron sheds, each separate from the rest and full of powder ; the whole is surrounded by barbed wire. A red-sided powder-barge, with a danger-flag at her sprit, is unloading at the jetty. Over the bed of thistles which here covers the salt marsh, one can see Dartford Creek, up which a tug passes with a string of dumb barges ; and close alongside is Long Reach Tavern, a tall, dismal, stucco-covered building leaning on the shores that hold it up. A causeway stretches over the mud to low-water mark. In the old days this was a favourite spot for prize-fights. The old house was so lonely that the battles were seldom interrupted. Here stand the beacons of the measured mile—that is to say, the upper ones. These are placed for the convenience of vessels running their steam-trials. The person in charge goes full speed at the line, and presses his stop-watch as the beacons come in line. Farther down Long Reach are the other pair of beacons. The stop-watch is again pressed as these come into line. The vessel then turns and repeats the operation upstream ; and the mean of the two runs—with and against the tide—gives the actual speed through the water. Just below are the hulks of the Small-pox Hospital—first the wooden line-of-battle ship *Atlas*, then the frigate *Endymion*, and last the old twin hulls of the *Castalia*, built years ago for the cross-Channel service and the abolition of sea-sickness. A

## London to the Nore

covered way connects the three ships together, and many a wave of the hand the nurses get from the friendly bargee as he sails past or tacks close to the hulks.

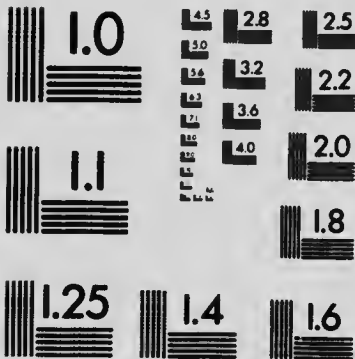
Leaving the Small-pox Hospital, we stretch over to the north side of the river, where the hamlet of Purfleet stands among green trees and sandy cliffs which rear their crests round the ballast-wharfs. At the end of the jetty lies a great new pink and white five-masted sailing ship, towering high out of the water in all the glory of steel spars and wire rigging—a great contrast to the stout old training ship *Cornwall*, whose battered teak sides have seen ninety years of service ; her great square tops and hemp tackle are fitted in the old-world fashion of a time when steam was in its infancy. In 1813 it was the custom to plank a vessel with a great deal of sheer, so that the lines rose at each end without regard to the ports, which they cut diagonally. Look at the bluff old bows, the quaint quarter galleries and stern-walk, overgrown with geraniums and creeping plants. All is peace now ; but in the fighting days, when she was the *Wellesley*, there were plenty of hard knocks given and received. This old seventy-two took part in the reduction of Kurrachee in 1839 ; and later, in 1841, bearing the flag of Sir William Parker, G.C.B., sucessfully attacked Chusan, covering the landing of Lieutenant-General Sir Hugh Gough's troops. In the capture of Amoy she attacked a heavy granite fort, firing from both broad-sides, the men furling the top-sails in the meanwhile. Thirty-four shots were taken from her sides afterwards. John Company built her in Bombay ; and very well





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## Erith

the work must have been done, for even now her lines run clean and sweet without a trace of hog or sag.

She sailed up here in 1868 from Sheerness, and is now used as a Juvenile Reformatory, supported by grants from Government and from the different counties which send their boys to her. It costs about twenty-five pounds a year to maintain a boy ; and, as the grants are not nearly sufficient for this, subscriptions, amounting to five hundred pounds a year, have to be obtained to keep up the good work. A great change it must be for these young thieves to be taken away from their rascality and suddenly plunged into a new life—a life of prayer, baths, regular meals, scrubbed decks, sail-drill, and school gymnastics, rowing, splicing, swimming, and all manly exercises. There is fire-brigade drill on Tuesday ; much dancing and skylarking, with the music of the band, on Wednesday. On Thursday the captain reads a story. “The *Cornwall* is a happy ship.”

The Mar Dyke flows into the Thames just above Purfleet. Here are large powder-magazines ; also some tea-gardens for the East-End trippers, who often come down by the Tilbury railway. The view from the top of the sand-cliffs at the Botany is very exquisite at all times, and the trees and low-lying meadows form a beautiful foreground. You look up over Erith Rands, and in clear weather the dome of St Paul's can be seen, with the whole course of the Thames, as there is no high land to interrupt the view. Turning south, you can make out the creeks winding away to

## London to the Nore

Dartford and Crayford, and on into the very heart of Kent ; looking down Long Reach, you may see Greenhithe, Grays, even Gravesend, and beyond. In fact, the winding river is seen both up and down for a great many miles.

Here are the remains of an old lighthouse. Tradition says that Queen Elizabeth stood on this spot to view her fleet anchored in Long Reach.

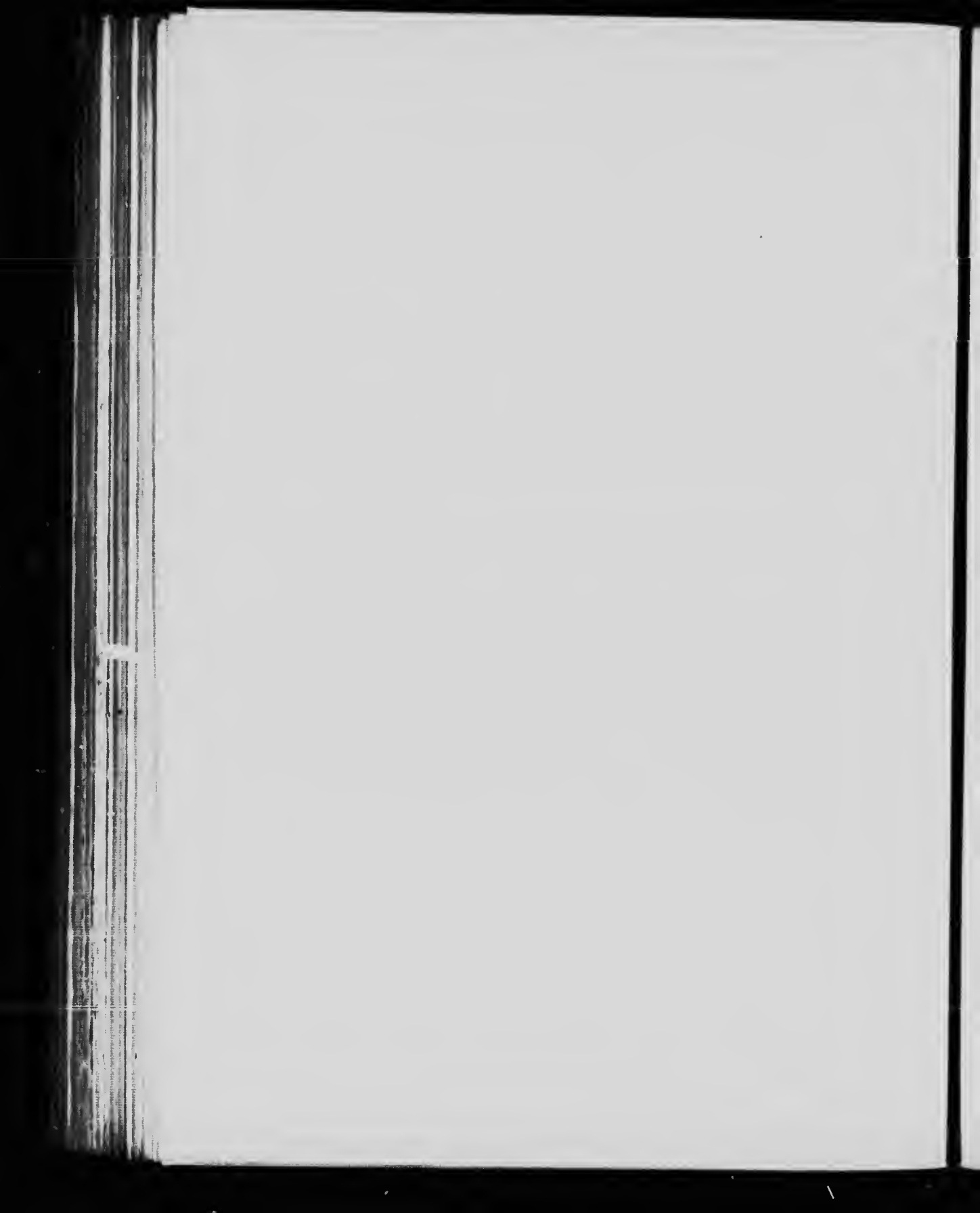
A drizzle is falling, with a light south-west wind, when we stand down the river, hugging the south shore, as the tide is just beginning to flow. It would be interesting to find out how all the branches and boles of trees came to the slope of stiff clay which forms the bank. They look for all the world as if they had grown on the spot ; the roots seem to grow down into the soil itself. On the other hand, these salt marshes seem a very unlikely place for a forest. However, here are the trees—hundreds of them—they spread all along Long Reach, and the sea-wall seems to have been built over them ; and as we push slowly down against the tide we bump some of the submerged trunks which stand out from the bank here and there. Now the rain falls faster ; and as we are making very little way, and it is nearly dark, we brail up the main, drop the top-sail, and anchor for the night not far away from a jetty where a great tank-steamer and several sailing ships are discharging paraffin. There are scores of grey cylinders ashore, all full of oil ; and one cannot help thinking what a blaze there would be if they caught fire.



THE REMAINS OF A FOREST, LONG REACH







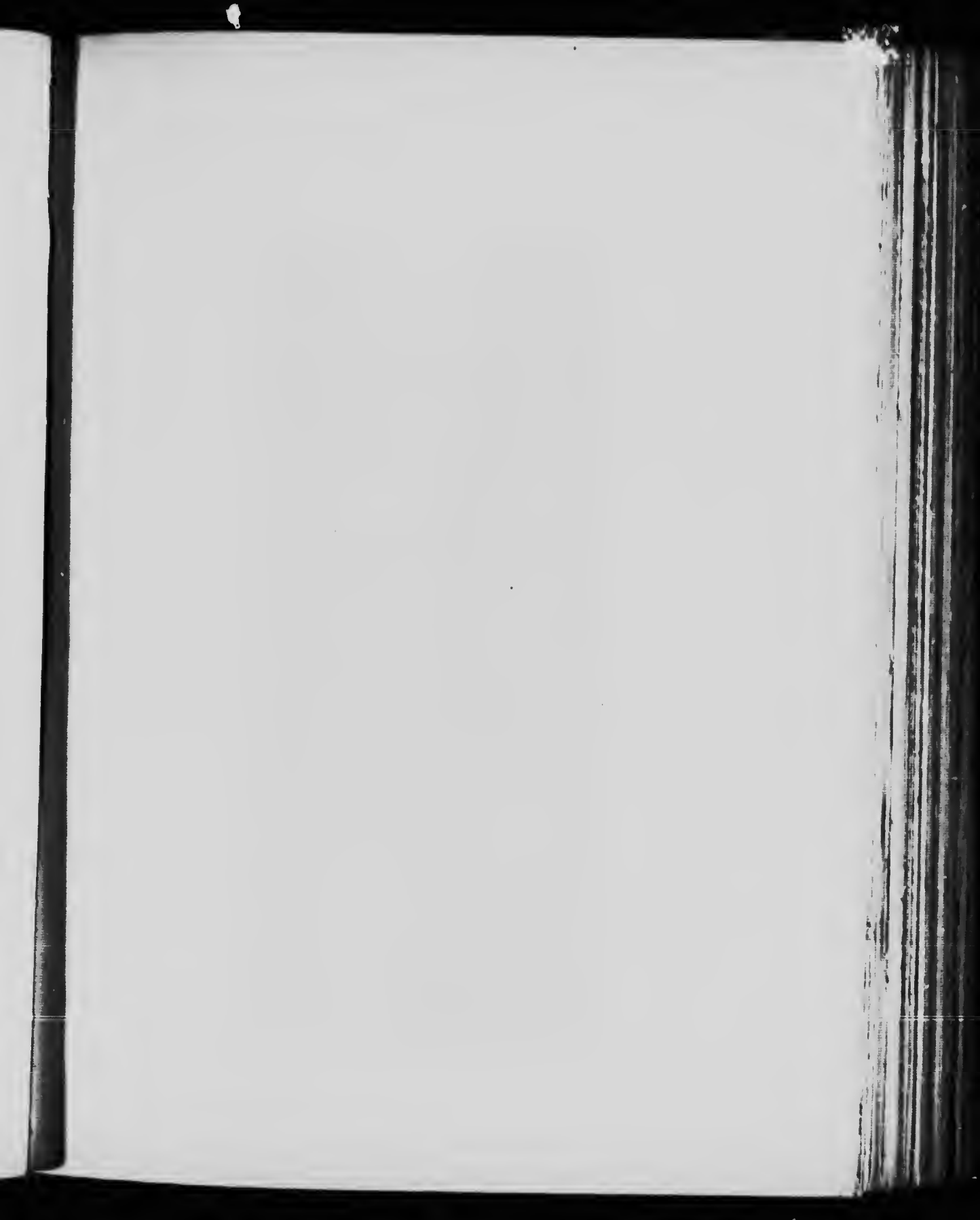
## Erith

The weighing of the anchor wakes me, and, being of a curious mind, I get up to see what is doing to-day. The air is soft and moist ; the decks are soaked with dew ; the Skipper stands aft, a picturesque figure with dewdrops on his moustache and beard and wreathed in gossamer. A light grey mist envelops the whole of the river. The sun is a pale disc faintly seen ; and floating in the air are millions of little spiders, each borne by its thread of gossamer beaded with tiny drops of dew—reminding one of the pretty legend that these are the shreds of the Virgin Mary's shroud which she cast away when she was taken up to heaven. The sun shines with a faint silvery light over the surface of the grey oily water. All sails are set ; but their only use is to attract the gossamer, which is hanging in festoons over them. The barge is drifting crab-wise across the tide ; there is a man in the bow with a long oar trying to keep her head in the right direction, and give her a little steerage way. We know we are nearing Greenhithe by the shrill pipe of the boatswains on board the training ships ; and the up-going craft are awake to the fact that the mist is rising and the ebb nearly run. All round, but invisible, are the sounds of briskly-turned windlasses and the click of the pawls as the anchors are weighed. The *Worcester* looms big ahead of us, and a few strokes of the oars take us across her bows. The fore-sail is let go and the main-sail brailed. A boat puts off hurriedly from the ship. The captain's compliments, and would we please not anchor over the water-pipes that run from the ship to

## London to the Nore

the shore? The anchor is let go with a run, clear of everything, in a comfortable inside berth out of all the traffic. The hands set to work to scrub decks, and it is time to go below to breakfast.

Above Greenhithe lies the *Warspite*, moored with her bluff old bows up-stream. She is crowded with lads, as is the saucy frigate *Arethusa*, lying just below. These ships, with their teeming life, animate the whole reach. The bands playing, the shrill pipes of the boatswains, and those extraordinarily gruff voices which none but instructors ever seem to possess, fill the air with life and sound. It goes on the whole day long from reveille to "Lights out." Early in the morning sail-drill begins. There is a shrill pipe, "'Way aloft!" and hundreds of feet patter up the ratlines—"Lay out!" and they all edge along the foot-ropes until the yards are black with them—"Let fall!" and down comes the heavy sail, creased and full of folds; down come the boys into the tops and on to the deck—"Sheet home! Hoist away!" and with much stamping the heavy yards are mast-headed. There are skulkers here as elsewhere. A stentorian voice is roaring: "What's that boy doing lying down in the top? Come out of it!" By the end of the day it seems as if the hapless urchins had to come out of a good many places. Three small boys had ensconced themselves safely in the folds of the jib; but by-and-by the oft-repeated cry came again—"Come out of it!"—and as each boy passed he had to run the gauntlet of the instructor on the forecastle-



GREENHITHE: BRISK EAST WIND





## Erith

head with a knotted rope, which, it must be admitted, they took grinning. Then comes physical drill, and, as the preparatory order is given, you hear the stamping of feet, and the unseen boys move into their allotted positions. The band strikes up, marking the time very distinctly for the different movements.

"I'll | stick | to the ship | lads ;  
You | save | your | lives.  
I've | no | one | to love me ;  
You've | sweethearts | and wives ;"

and so on. Then there is a halt ; the noise of the feet ceases, and the next exercise begins.

"For | his | heart is | like the | sea,  
Ever | open | gay | and free,  
And the girls must lone-ly be  
Till his ship comes back ;  
But if love's the best of all  
That can a man befall,  
Why, Jack's the king of all,  
For they all love Jack !"

The *Warspite* was originally H.M.S. *Waterloo* of one hundred and twenty guns—a first-rate line-of-battle ship, afterwards cut down to eighty guns, thus becoming second-rate, and renamed the *Conqueror*. In 1876, lent to the Marine Society, she was rechristened *Warspite*, in commemoration of a vessel that belonged to the Society and was burnt to the water's edge on January 4, 1876, only twelve days after the destruction of the *Goliath* off Grays. At the time there were about



## London to the Nore

one hundred and eighty boys on board, all asleep, except the officer and four lads who were on watch. The fire was first noticed by a boy named Cotton, who informed Mr Webber, the officer of the watch, that smoke was coming up from the cockpit. On inspection it was found that the boatswain's store was on fire. Mr Webber rushed down to put out the flames, but was overpowered by the smoke ; and if it had not been that two lads went to his rescue he would have lost his life. The fire-bell was rung, and all hands were summoned to the pumps, which were playing on the flames in less than ten minutes. In spite of many efforts, the fire increased ; and the boys, obedient to discipline, retreated in order to the main-deck, carrying with them their hammocks and as much of their kit as they could find. Fiercer and fiercer the flames became ; and the lads retreated to the upper-deck, falling in as on parade, and quite steadily marched in batches on board the boats, and landed at Charlton Pier—except a few of the older boys, who begged to stay behind and help to fight the fire. Captain Phipps, R.N., arrived on board at three a.m. from his house on shore, and gave orders to scuttle the ship. All the time floating engines played their hose over the doomed vessel—some from the water, some from the shore,—but to no purpose ; and though scuttled, it being low water, she rested on the mud. About twelve the mizzen fell over the port-side, and at a quarter to one the main and fore masts shared the same fate and came down with a crash. By this time

## Erith

the ship was ablaze from stem to stern, and from the river presented the appearance of a huge furnace. The ensign was hoisted at the stern before she was abandoned, and she met her fate with her colours flying.

The Marine Society was the very first of the kind to have training ships as an institution. It was the same old story, but not quite so bad, as in Pepys' time, a hundred years before, when the seamen had poor clothes, no food, no money, and poor Pepys was at his wits' end to know what to do for them. Mr Jones Hanway (all honour to him) stirred up the City to start a society to offer landsmen volunteers a complete uniform and sea-kit for service in the fleet ; for the ships were ill-found and insufficiently manned in 1756, when war was declared between England and France. Consequently, Mr Hanway was the means of making things more comfortable in the men's quarters on board men-o'-war, by sending clean, well-clad men as sailors, instead of the evil creatures who usually offered themselves or were captured by the press-gang. About the same time that the Society began operations, the blind magistrate, Mr John Fielding, at the suggestion of Captain the Duke of Bolton, of H.M.S. *Barfleur*, started a fund for sending to sea poor and destitute boys who were brought before him. This fund being exhausted, he applied to the Marine Society, which gladly consented to undertake his work. Gangs of boys were collected by the Society's agents, medically examined, clothed in sailors' uniforms, and sent on board our ships. The work was of such utility

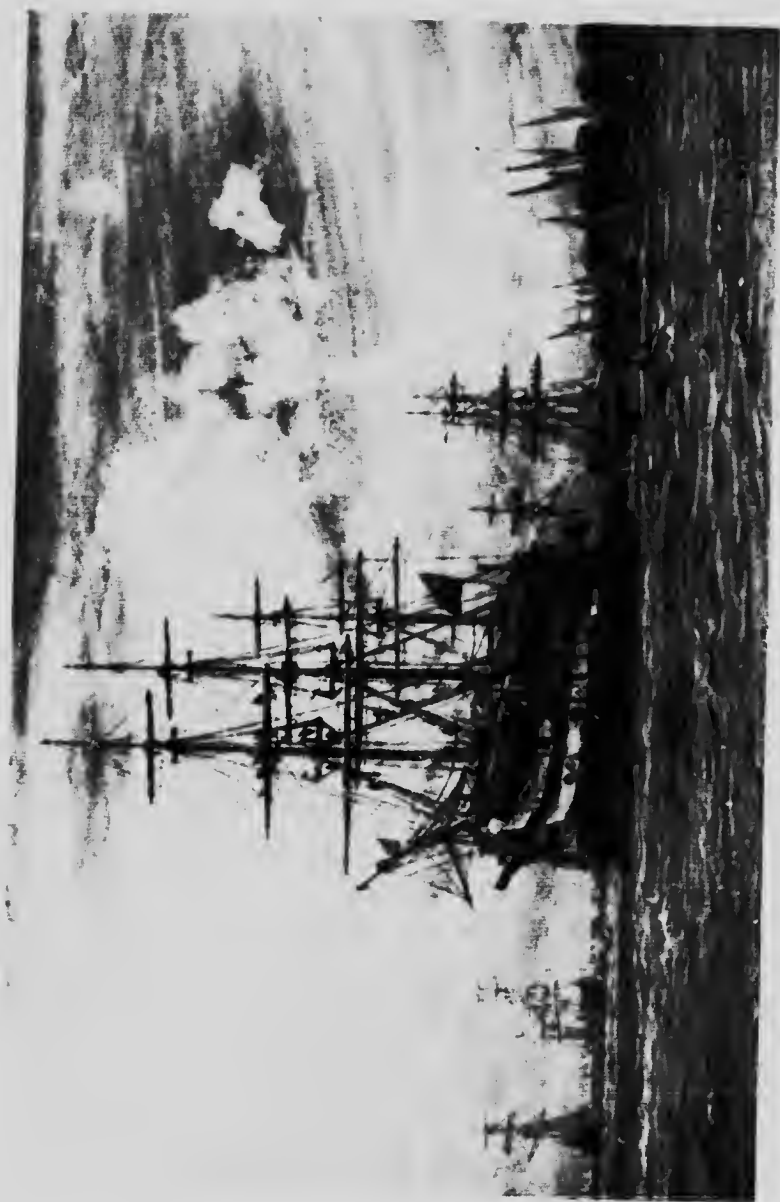
## London to the Nore

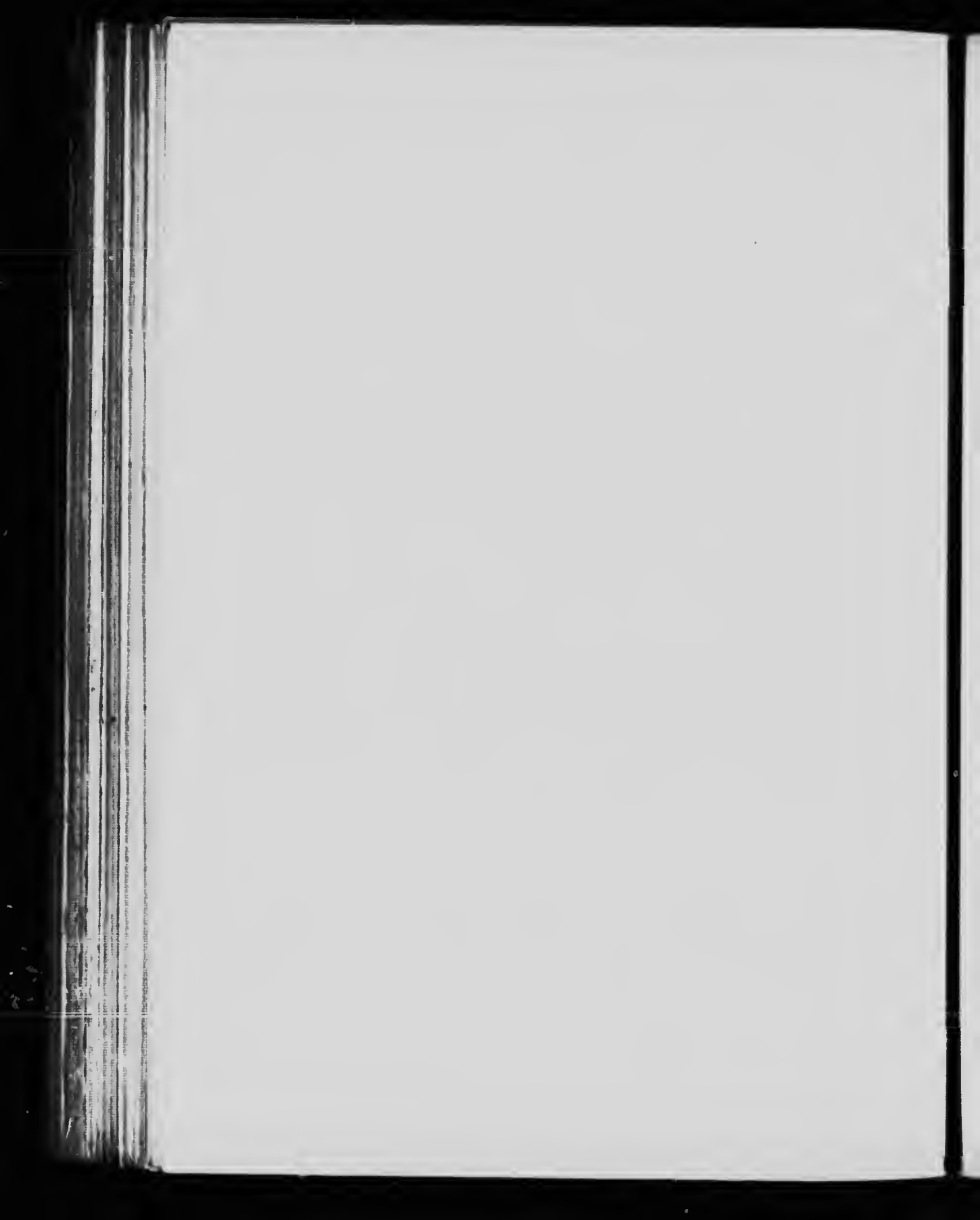
that contributions poured in from all parts of the kingdom. Between the years 1756 and 1763 it sent to sea no fewer than five thousand one hundred and seventy-four boys ; and from 1756 to 1814, when the country was finally at peace, thirty-nine thousand three hundred and sixty landsmen volunteers. The boys are the sons of parents who are not able to fit them out for sea at their own expense, and are not admitted unless they have very good characters. It must be a part of their life that they look back at with pleasure in later years. The difference which good food, drill, and healthy exercise make in the lads is wonderful.

Our King and Queen have shown a very practical interest in the work ever since, as Prince and Princess of Wales, with Prince Albert Victor and Prince George, in 1877, they came on board—our Queen to distribute the prizes to the boys. The King inspected them, applauded the good work, and headed a donation list with a gift of one hundred and five pounds ; his contributions have since amounted to one thousand one hundred pounds. There is accommodation on board the *Warspite* for three hundred lads ; but, for want of funds, only two hundred and twenty have been shipped. All round one hears of people who would like to give to charities if they could be sure the money would be properly used. In this case there can be no doubt. The lads must have good characters, and all help in their manly after-life to uphold our supremacy on the sea. Recent events have shown us how important it is that our resources should be sufficient to meet the



"WARSPITE" AND "ARETHUSA" TRAINING SHIPS





## Erith

demands of the Army and Navy. On the training ships *Arethusa* and *Chichester*, as on all the other school ships that lie moored up and down these reaches, splendid material is being nurtured and trained.

The *Arethusa* is the old fifty-gun frigate (Captain W. Mends) that at the bombardment of Sebastopol was set on fire from a red-hot shot while engaging Fort Constantine, which mounted a hundred guns. Four men were killed and fourteen wounded. She had the temerity to sail into Odessa harbour, where she fired a broadside, reefed top-sails in stays, and then poured in the other broadside as she sailed out again. Her tender, the *Chichester*, is a brigantine of one hundred and twenty tons, in which the lads are taken to sea for a week at a time; and very well they handle her. The management are ever mindful of a growing boy's appetite; and on these occasions extra rations are served out, and the lads are allowed to go to the biscuit-box whenever they like. Thus the boys, to begin with, have for a school a ship they may well be proud of. The only recommendation they require is that they are good, fatherless, and poor.

This ship and her tender belong to the National Refuges for Homeless and Destitute Children. The Society, dependent on subscriptions and legacies, has been the means of rescuing some seventeen thousand lads. The boys' band is excellent, and very popular for an out-door *fête* of any sort; and an engagement means a day ashore that the lads enjoy thoroughly.





## CHAPTER X

### H.M.S. "WORCESTER"

"**A**LL cadets must leave on the closing day of term, and the Committee does not hold itself responsible for any of the boys from the time they are landed at Greenhithe until they are reshipped on return days."

"You are a cad!"—"Oh, I say, stop it! don't!"  
—"Here, young 'un: I'll punch your head if I have any of that."

These exclamations were repeated so often that curiosity impelled me to look over the low partition of our compartment. As the train drew up at Greenhithe the platform had been rushed by boys bursting with health and high spirits. Very smart and well turned



H.M.S. "WORCESTER," NAUTICAL COLLEGE



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## H.M.S. "Worcester"

out, in black-cloth short jackets, brass buttons, and neat peaked caps, shouldering one another into the carriages, all were in wild spirits on this the first day of the long holidays, and each was armed with an instrument of torture called a "teaser" or "bintiewang." The rest of the journey up to town was interrupted by the same little exclamations of pain—"I say, shut up!"—"You cad, you!"—"Here : stop it!" The instrument was ingenious and far-reaching, being lengths of thick strong elastic, and no doubt could be made into an effective catapult if necessity arose.

These boys had all come from on board the noble ship *Worcester*, which lies moored below the causeway at Greenhithe, a beautiful ship and quite a feature on this part of the river. All the term the cadets have had their minds crammed with useful knowledge—practical navigation, the day's work, great circle sailing, nautical astronomy, magnetism, geometry, Scripture, chart-drawing, history, steam, naval architecture, meteorology, seamanship, signalling, and the rule of the road. Is it wonderful that the Committee will not be responsible for these boys, who, charged with all this learning, are like bottles of champagne from which the wires have been removed?

When launched the *Worcester* was known as the *Frederic William*, a steam two-decker. Where the engines used to throb and whisper is now a lofty gymnasium; and where the thirty-two pounders grinned in rows along the lower-deck are the chests and hammocks of the cadets; and the main-deck, from which

## London to the Nore

all traces of war paraphernalia have been removed, is turned into a splendid ninety-foot class-room, where, in a stand railed as if it were an altar, is the silver challenge cup pulled for annually by picked crews of the *Worcester* and the *Conway*. The boys one and all appreciate the life thoroughly. The able commander, Captain Wilson Barker, once a *Worcester* boy himself, understands and is understood by the cadets; and many a fine man has been turned out from this school besides Admiral Togo.

The ship lies in a particularly pleasant position, fairly close to the shore, and from the deck one can see the beautiful lawns of Ingress Abbey, where stand some fine trees and woods sloping off a gentle hill at the back of the house, which is built from the stones of old London Bridge. I remember well how nice it was, when we used to come racing on this river, some years ago, to have a boat pull off to us, almost before we had time to anchor, bearing a little cocked-hat note from Captain Smith with a hearty invitation to come on board to breakfast. How spotless everything was! How jolly the boys looked! How kind the welcome, and how good the fragrance of the meal after our cold sail round in the early morning! The *Worcester* we counted one of our ports of refuge in a storm. The *Exmouth* was another; and the "Lobster Smack" on Canvey Island our last. Unfortunately, kind Captain Smith is no more.

Greenhithe proper is a pretty little spot with its one main street and three causeways. The boats that are





FIDDLER'S REACH





## H.M.S. "Worcester"

constantly rowing backwards and forwards from the ships keep it alive and bustling. There is also a jetty where the chalk is shot into ships from trucks that come running down the tramway from the chalk-quarries, which burrow deep into the green woods behind the town.

Fiddler's Reach is a sharp twist in the course of the Thames. The tide runs very swiftly, and when the wind blows hard in an opposite direction it raises an ugly sea ; the curling waves are wonderfully fierce for so small a stretch of water. We start beating down for Grays Thurrock, as the strong north-east wind makes Greenhithe a little too lively for comfort. The setting sun is shining brightly on the red sails of the top-sail barges cross-tacking on the lumpy water. Soon we are past the square tower of St Clement's Church, which stands out on the marsh quite away from any houses. Just beyond we tack close to the edge of Black Shelf, and stand across a savage streak of tide rip—all white breakers and spray—towards Broadness, where a bright-flashing light winks every ten seconds from an iron tower of red tressel-work. Then, going about once more, we stand towards the fine old two-decker *Exmouth*. "Up main-sail," says the Skipper, easing away the main-sheet, while the winch-handles fly round, brailing up the heavy red canvas, bellying and flapping to the last in the keen, strong north-east wind. Soon we are running quietly up inside the training ship, watched by hundreds of eyes, which follow us curiously from the crowded ports ; and a little later we pick up a

## London to the Nore

quiet berth with a capital view of the *Exmouth* and the *Shafesbury*.

The wind is much too cold, and the decks are too wet with dew, to allow us to sit out this evening. Bright rays shine through the skylights, and the sweet tones of Grey's viola drift up to us through the open ports, luring us below. Everything is delightfully cosy and warm in the cabin—the soft pink of the walls, the deep crimson of the cushions, the pink glow from the lamp, and the sparkling great eyes of the Princess, lighted up with pleasure as Grey, who has curled himself up on a corner of the locker, draws forth the long lingering notes of the "Broken Melody," the tune she loves above all others. Beauty, with her head thrown back on the cushions, is listening to the music; her hands lie idly on her lap, clasping the book she has been reading. Harold sits at the little side-table, rapidly drawing some new idea for a single-handed cruiser. The Master drops into an arm-chair. I go quietly through to our cabin to join Baby's frolics in his tub. The viola sounds as clearly here as in the saloon, and is now playing a sonata of Mozart.

The lads on the *Exmouth* are evidently early risers. They are very busy, though it seems only the everyday routine. The ship resounds with scrubbing and the "sish" of the hose; a shrill pipe sounds, and up go all the flags. The ships look splendid, borne on the bosom of the river, which shimmers and sparkles right away as far as one can see under the half-veiled sun.



BROAD NESS







## H.M.S. "Exmouth"

This vessel, a wooden two-decker pierced for ninety-one guns, was originally built for sailing only, and during her first commission was attached to the fleet employed in the Baltic under Admiral Sir Charles Napier during the Russian War; she was the flagship of Rear-Admiral Sir M. Seymour. Her nicely proportioned masts and yards are those of a corvette, not the usual scraggy skeleton gear, much too thin to carry any press of sail, that one sees in most training ships; and the bowsprit is her own original spar. Until about two years ago this ship was commanded by Captain Bouchier, R.N., who resigned after thirty-one years' service on the *Goliath* and the *Exmouth*. He and the officers under him built up the great traditions on which the ship now relies. They encouraged in the ship's company an *esprit de corps* which would challenge comparison with that of any public school.

At eight o'clock on a bitter cold morning in December a terrible fire broke out on the great ship *Goliath*. It was barely light enough to see; the wind was blowing in great gusts over the deck, whistling and shrieking through the rigging. A small boy called Loeber came staggering along the main-deck with a lamp he had just unhung. As he approached the lamp-room the iron suspender burnt his hand, and he let the lamp fall with a crash. Immediately a flame leapt up. This the brave little fellow tried to extinguish with his serge top, which he snatched off, threw on the flame and sat upon, beating and trying to crush out the blaze; but the floor of the room, saturated with oil, caught fire.

## London to the Nore

A boy who was passing saw the flames, and flew along the deck to Mr Hall, the chief officer, who said, "Go and tell the captain," and himself hurried to the fire-bell. "Tang, tang, tang, tang," pealed the harsh voice of the bell. The officers on board made an attempt to rush to their separate stations; but the fire licked and burnt with such fury that many were unable to reach them. The wind was so high that it very soon became evident that there was no hope of saving the ship. Life became the only consideration. The boys numbered some four hundred and eighty-five and the officers twenty. After working at the pumps until the hose was burnt through, the brave lads made their way to the ports and clambered into the boats. By this time the flames had taken possession of the upper-deck, and it became impossible to lower the boats in the ordinary way. Captain Bouchier and a boy attempted to clear the falls of one, and managed to lower her some way; but the remorseless flames advanced and burnt the ropes, precipitating the boys into the ice-cold river. Another party who had found their way through smoke and flame to the fore-castle were obliged, with Mr Harley, to drop on to the mooring cable, where he and the lads remained some minutes, holding on for their lives, until picked off by a barge's boat. A poor chap, one of the smallest boys in the ship, could not for some time be persuaded to quit the fore-castle. It was a pitiful sight to see this child, with the flames every minute approaching nearer and nearer to him, looking down in an agony of terror at the master of a steam-

## H.M.S. "Goliath"

tug whose open arms were ready to receive him. At last he made a jump, but only just in time, as the tug was unable to remain any longer near the burning vessel. Mr Thompson, the head carpenter, after seeing the pumps manned, tried to break the large pipe which communicated with the sea-cock ; but the volumes of smoke drove him back : so he made for the orlop deck, where he found boys striving vainly to make their escape. He knocked away the iron bars from the ports, which were their only means of rescue. By this time the fire had completely enveloped the lower-deck. Breaking the hot pipes on both lower and main decks, so that the water flowed over them, Mr Thompson made his way to one of the davits, where a boat was hanging by a fall, which he cut, releasing her, so that she fell into the river with some ten boys on board, who just managed to keep her afloat until they drifted on shore. Luckily, too, the water-tank barge was moored alongside. Twenty boys got into her, and were just about to push off when young William Bolton rushed forward and exclaimed, "If you cast off, I'll knock you down ! We can take many more boys yet." Another hundred got on board, and she, too, drifted ashore safely. This brave little fellow was only thirteen. Mr Gunton, Mr Norris, and Mr Fenn, finding their efforts at the pumps useless, went to the rescue of the women. An attempt was made to lower the galley ; but, owing to the flames, the falls had to be cut, and the galley, falling badly, swamped and floated away, Mr Fenn at the same time being thrown into the

## London to the Nore

water. Mr Norris then got into the pinnace, and took turns round the thwarts with the life-lines, and cut the falls ; the boat was lowered successfully. Had it failed, the ladies would have lost their lives. The boat came down with much force close to where Mr Fenn was struggling in the water. With presence of mind, Miss Ethel Bouchier threw him a line, by which means he reached the pinnace. Next came Mrs Bouchier. A rope had been thrown up to her, which reached below the stern window, and one to Miss Florence ; but these had burnt through. Thus, jumping was the only alternative. She was at last persuaded to leap some twenty-five feet into the water, and the poor lady was pulled into the boat in an exhausted condition. Miss Florence managed to secure a rope, down which she slid, dangling in mid-air until the boat was able to get close to her. Quite exhausted, she at last dropped just clear of the cable, and was dragged into safety. Miss Ethel and the maids were rescued in a similar manner.

While this was going on Captain Bouchier stood on the gangway surrounded by thirty or forty boys, with no apparent means of escape. Turning, he appealed to the lads, asking, "Can any of you swim to the launch?"—a large boat moored between the ship and the shore. Two boys, Longhurst and Murphy, put up their hands. "Very well," said the captain: "strip." Off they started. Dense volumes of smoke soon hid them from view. Ere long, the flames burst out from the lower-deck ports, so close to this little

## H.M.S. "Goliath"

group that it became necessary to reduce the number. The captain, finding no launch or other boat arrive, happened to see some large bread-boxes just behind him, threw them overboard, and told the boys to hold on. Several reached the shore; others took to the water, and were picked up by various boats; many swam to land. This brought down the number to five-and-twenty. As their companions left, the terror of the little chaps who could not swim increased. Captain Bouchier said, "Now, boys, when I say 'Three,' sing out as loudly as you can, 'Bring the launch!'" Through the fire and smoke rang the children's shrill voices, "Bring the launch!" No launch came; but the *Whaler*, pulled by eager hands, dashed through the cloud—not a moment too soon. One small boy, Mudkin, thought more of his captain at this terrible moment than of himself. He cried, "Do go, sir; do go first, or you will be burnt! If you go, we will follow." "No, my boy," said the captain: "I must be last—that's the way at sea."

After Captain Bouchier had been taken from the gangway, he was received by Captain Walter, who had come in his galley from the *Arethusa* at Greenhithe. At the moment the foremost cables were running out red-hot; the fore-mast was one mass of flames, and threatening to fall. As the boat was pulling off, Captain Bouchier caught sight of a little fellow, Naylor, still clinging to a large wooden fender. The boat shot to his rescue. So close were the flames, Captain Walter's flannel shirt was singed, and the beards of those on board

## London to the Nore

were burned ; but they got the boy from his terrible position, amidst a great burst of cheering from the onlookers. It is awful to think what the loss might have been if the discipline had not been perfect. As it was, some nineteen perished.

Captain Colmore, R.N., her present captain, has thoroughly reorganised and brought the boys' training up to the latest Admiralty order. Mr Ismay, the founder of the White Star Line, observed a few years ago in a speech delivered in Liverpool : "I recognise more and more as time goes on—with the extraordinarily rapid transfer of our great Mercantile Marine from sail to steam—that it is upon the training ships that we must in future depend for our supply of seamen. It is not merely a question of shipowners : it is a national question." From this ship alone two thousand seven hundred boys have entered the Royal Navy, one thousand two hundred the Army, and two thousand nine hundred the Mercantile Marine. The lads are maintained by the Poor Law authorities, who directly and indirectly support this training ship, which accommodates six hundred.

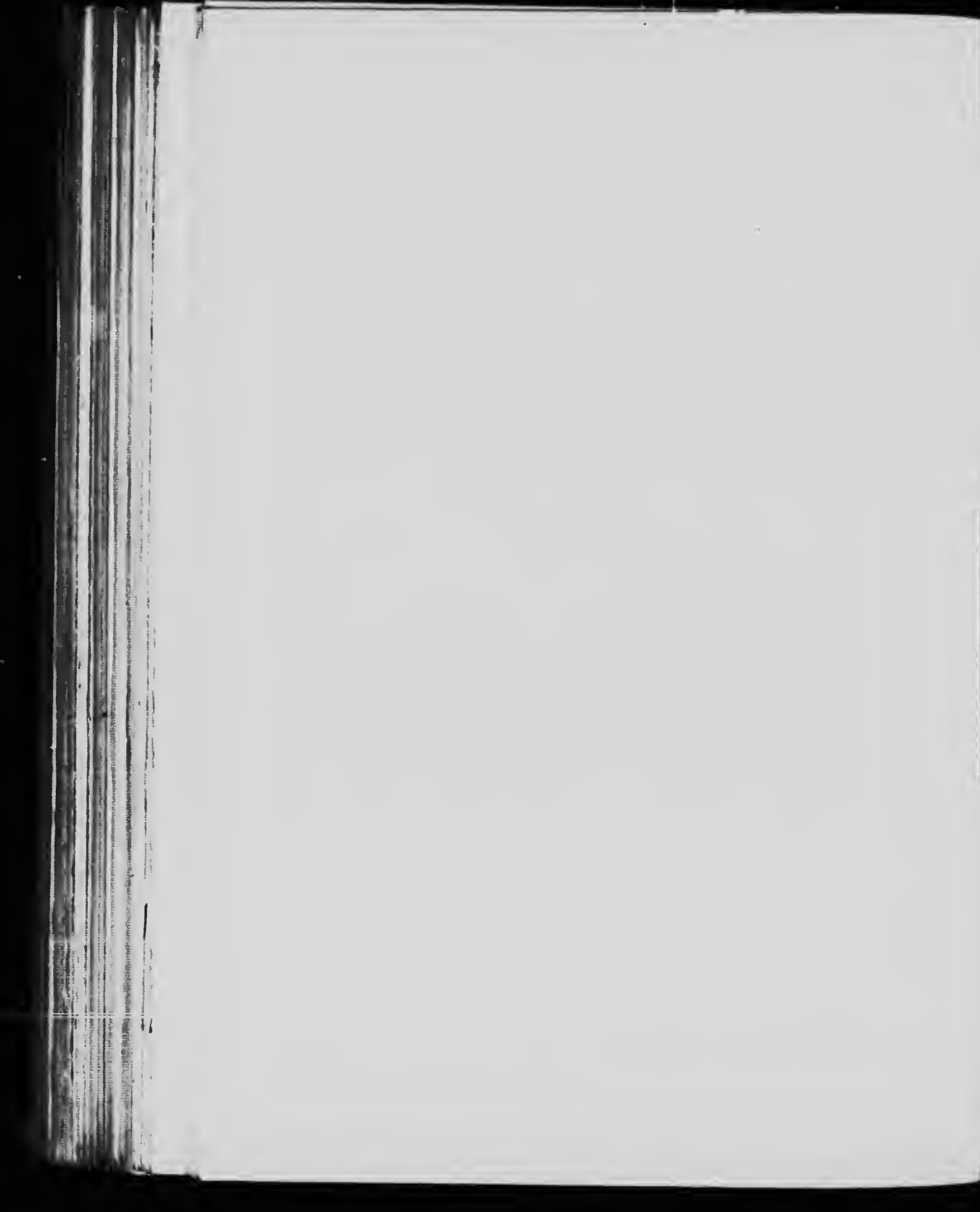
The training, which is thorough, starts the moment a boy is received on board, with a swimming lesson that lasts half an hour. This is probably the worst half hour the lad ever undergoes. The lesson is repeated every day until he can swim fifty yards. Then he goes to the tailor's shop, to be taught the use of his needle, and learns to mend and wash his own clothes ; then to school ; and in his watch out of school he learns





"EXMOUTH" AND "SHAFTESBURY" OFF GRAYS





## The "Steadfast"

gymnastics and rowing alternately. Then come seamanship, gunnery, and practical sailing in the hundred-ton brigantine, which now takes the place of the old *Steadfast*, which I remember well watching from the *Teutonic* at Spithead the day the Emperor William came to see our first armed auxiliary and the splendid drill with her nice new guns.

The *Steadfast*, whose top-sail bore a notice in large letters that she belonged to the training ship *Exmouth*, was "cavorting" and showing off before the astonished eyes of all Spithead. As she ran to leeward of the big liner her main-sail was becalmed for a moment, and the main-boom, swinging to windward, knocked an unsuspecting schoolmaster, who was sitting on the weather gunwale, into the sea, as if he had been shot from a catapult. A life-buoy was thrown to him, and the first officer of the *Teutonic* dived off the poop with another buoy, which he placed over his head. As the schoolmaster was rather dazed from the blow he had received, boats were lowered from both ships ; but the nippy *Steadfasts* got there first. There were some four hundred boys from the training ship *Indefatigable* on board our ship, and it was thrilling to hear them cheer as the first officer walked dripping along the deck. The *Exmouth* boys manned their rigging, also cheering wildly, and our band played "See the Conquering Hero Comes."

It is prize-day on board the *Shaftesbury*. That is why she is decked from stem to stern with bunting.

## London to the Nore

The *Exmouth*, to show her sympathy, has run up her mast-head flags. Up and down the river the extra smart boys are pulling the visitors in beautifully clean boats to and from the ship. The annual inspection and distribution of prizes is at the camp, West Field, Grays, a capital piece of ground set apart for the use of the lads, who camp there for six or seven weeks during the summer. One of the smartest and prettiest sights is to watch the boys at their gun-drill. As the wind blows towards us it brings a wave of music from the band, which is a full military one of some forty-five performers. Many of these boys' homes are wretchedly bad, and it seems almost impossible that they should grow up to be decent citizens. They have been in the company of thieves and immoral persons. Driving them to school would be useless. It is a home they want. The School Board steps in, and, under the authority conferred by Parliament, takes the lads right away. Captain Scriven's object is to get as many boys as possible into the Army, the Navy, and the Merchant Service, because they are more likely to turn out well if subjected to a continuance of the disciplined life to which they have become accustomed. Boys leaving these institutions never have the slightest difficulty in getting situations. In fact, there is always a competition for the lads, which redounds greatly to the credit of their officers. The P. and O., the Orient, the Atlantic, the Tyser, the New Zealand, the Canadian, the White Star, the Albion, and the Watkin steam-tugs regularly ship *Shaftesbury* boys on their steamers.

## The "Shaftesbury"

Captain Scriven has a splendid hold for good over the lads. This can be seen from the letters he receives from them long after they have left the ship. In want or other difficulty they appeal to him, knowing well that he will give their requests careful attention, and advise them for the best. Here is a sample. The letter is from a gunner in the 8th R.F.A. at Ladysmith.

"DEAR SIR,—I now have the opportunity of writing a few lines to you after being some considerable time away from the ship. I have been in Africa four years come May 1904, and so I have taken it into consideration to write to you. I have come across several of the old boys. R—— is in the 7th Dragoon Guards, stationed with us at present in Ladysmith. F—— is in the Border Regiment. I met him at Wolverdein Station in the Potchefstroom district. We all belong to Mr Taylor's Division, 5th. We are all in the best of health. I am in the possession of the Queen's and King's medals. I was at Nooitgedacht fight with General Clements' column. I will not go into detail, because I know you give the boys a lecture on Sundays in the evening. Please give my kindest regards to all. Sir, I beg to ask a favour, if you could recommend me to the Committee to see if they can do anything towards getting me into the police force, as I have a notion for them. My height is six feet one inch in stockings. I have only twelve months this October for my seven years with the colours, providing they do not make me do my extra year. I should be very much obliged for

## London to the Nore

an answer as early as possible, so that I can see my way clear to look for another occupation, as I have no other trade in my hand ; so I will conclude with my very best respects to you and all on board.

“Yours respectfully,  
“H. R.”

The impression left on us by the appearance of the boys at work and at play is that they are exceptionally happy and contented. The lad who goes out in command of a cutter full of fellows bigger than himself has “a real good time.” In a voice of fine authority he gives his orders : “Shove off!”—“Give way, star-board!”—“Back, port!”—“Give way together!”—and with the sound of the oars in the rowlocks and a measured splash the cutter gathers way. It is good to see this small coxswain pummelling boys much bigger than himself when they do not put their weight into the stroke. Of course, they must not hit back at a petty officer, however small he may be.

In fact, the hundreds of boys have been such an amusement to us all that the next reaches of the river will sound very dull and silent.

## CHAPTER XI

### NORTHFLEET TO TILBURY DOCKS



**T**HERE is a change in the colour of the sky. The air is filled with a thin grey vapour from tall shafts on both sides of the river.

About forty years ago someone found out that the stiff mud of the Medway salt marshes, when mixed in proper proportion with chalk and burnt, would make Portland cement. This discovery is slowly changing

the face of the country round the lower Thames and the Medway. Many acres of salt marsh have been dug away ; millions of tons of chalk have been carved out of the downs of Kent and Essex, to be ground and burnt and sent to all parts of the world. From Stone to the other end of Northfleet all the villages are covered



## London to the Nore

with a thin coat of soft grey cement. The houses have grey walls and grey roofs. The men come home from their work with grey eyebrows, eyelashes, beards, hair, and clothes ; there is everywhere a fine, impalpable powder ; even the sun shines hazily. Miles away, when the wind shifts and the dust of a cement factory is blown towards you, you are aware of the fact. It is not that nature is more ugly than before. Nature is different. Sometimes in the winter, when the air is heavy with damp, the thick white dust from the Northfleet cement-works drifts down upon the river in such dense clouds that the traffic has to be suspended, and vessels have to bring up just as they would if a thick sea-fog settled down on them.

Every factory has a little tramway line leading into the bowels of the chalk downs, sometimes a good distance inland ; and the sturdy engines thread their way through tunnels and deep cuttings, or out across the marshes, dragging the long trains of white waggons. At one spot, near Swanscombe, not content with carving away at the tall white cliffs, the cement people have mounted a crane grab, which, lowered into the green water of a lake in the quarry, comes up dripping and full of chalk, so that the lake is always growing wider and deeper. At night the whole cutting is lighted brightly by electric arc-lamps mounted on high poles ; and with the clouds of steam, crowds of busy workers, waving cranes, and white pinnacles carved into all sorts of weird forms stretching away up into the starlight, and reflected in the calm water below, the



# NORTHFLEET CEMENT WORKS





## Northfleet to Tilbury Docks

scene is rather unearthly. Hard by is what used to be a village green ; also there is an old wayside inn, the sign swinging in the midst of wrought-iron tastefully hammered. The whole should be suggestive of rural England, brown jugs, jolly farmers, and apple-faced children ; but the grey dust of the cement-works has fallen upon it, and everything is changed. The green is trodden and unkempt ; the red tiles and the green paint with gold letters of the old inn look sordid and ugly.

Northfleet is not a good place to bring up at. The ebb-tide runs with great force, and the river-bottom is nothing but hard chalk. Often when the anchor is let go it bounds along over the ground—perhaps catching now and then, only to break out a moment later. If anything will bring your heart into your mouth it is the sensation of drifting helplessly in a crowded waterway. "More chain!" you shout. "More yet!" All the time the great stump bowsprit of the billy-boy schooner seems coming at you like fate. It is no use spinning the wheel over: no vessel will take a sheer when she is running away with her anchor over a hard bottom. Shouting is the only chance. "Schooner, ahoy! Port your helm. Billy-boy, ahoy! Give her a sheer out." Other craft take up the cries. "*Emma*, ahoy! Sheer her out. Skipper, there's a craft driving foul of you!" A very sleepy person appears; he rushes to his tiller, and soon the great bluff bows go off into the stream. That was a close shave! "Heave up smart, and we will drop her down to better holding

## London to the Nore

ground. Up fore-sail ; up helm ! " What a relief to feel her go slowly off the wind !

Rosherville, the place at which to spend "a happy day," slips past. Here an embattled tower rises amid leafy hollows and ferny basins, and there are cliffs a hundred and fifty feet high, all in the site of an old ballast-pit. Farther down is an esplanade on which are a big club-house and a Moorish bath ; also a number of villas ; then we have timber-yards and coal-wharfs, and below these the tall iron columns of the Chatham and Dover Railway pier.

Now we come to Gravesend proper—all tea and shrimps, oilskins, sea-boots, and bloaters. The bawley boats, with their shrimp trawls hanging at the top-mast head, lie in rows upon the clean shingle beach. Hundreds of watermen's skiffs lie moored or ply between the countless craft outside. There is quite a fleet of tugs off the town pier ; below the terrace pier the coal-hulks and powder-boats stretch right away into the distance. Slipping round the stern of a smack painted green, and bearing the word "wreck" in big white letters on both sides, we let go our anchor once more, and feel we have picked up a comfortable berth this time. After the fore-sail is stowed and the top-sail hauled down, we have leisure to look about and try to take in the busy scene. The causeway is crowded with seafarers of all sorts—pilots, Custom House officers, Yankee men-o'-war men, bargees, fishermen. Over the red roofs and grey slates the Georgian church tower looms through the smoke and mist. Up-stream, the

## Northfleet to Tilbury Docks

cement chimneys of Northfleet blot out the distant flats and chalk-quarries with an opaque white vapour, through which we can just make out the forest of funnels and masts in the Tilbury Docks, and the many-storied hotel.

Every vessel passing Gravesend must slow down to be boarded by fussy steam launches of the Customs, Board of Trade, and the health officers. We can hear their whistles and sirens giving notice of their presence long before they come into sight. One of the great mooring buoys, sheering and twisting in the racing ebb, has been marked with a little red flag to show that it is bespoken. By-and-by two paddle-tugs bring a steel four-masted sailing ship out of the mist, sluing her round, head to stream, and churning the brown water into glistening white foam as they strain at the hawsers. Slowly she is coaxed up to the appointed buoy, which jerks from side to side as if unwilling to be held ; but a wire-rope is soon passed through the ring and hauled taut, while the waterman is shackling on the heavy chain cable. A mournful chant comes over the rushing water—

“ Whisky is the life of man !

*Chorus* : Whisky, Johnnie !

Whisky in an old tin can ;

*Chorus* : Whisky for my Johnnie !

Whisky made me pawn my clothes ; ”

—with the same chorus sung very slowly, as if it were a sigh from the bottomless pit—

“ Whisky gave me a broken nose ;

*Chorus* : Whisky for my Johnnie !

Whisky drove my old dad mad ; ”



## London to the Nore

—and so on through many verses. Then the air changes to the fine swinging chorus—

“We’re bound away this very day—  
We’re bound for the Rio Grande.”

The cluster of houses to the east of Tilbury Docks is neither a town nor a village—only groups of ugly dwellings for the hundreds of men in and dependent on the docks. Land must be cheap, one would think, as there is plenty round about ; but the houses are built in uninteresting four-storied grey blocks with iron balconies, colourless and dusty-looking. There is no attempt at gardens or prettiness anywhere. Crowds of children are playing in the dusty road, and everywhere is untidy paper flying up in little whirls with the dust. The mission-room is corrugated iron of a deadly uninteresting pattern ; but the hospital alongside, given by Mr Passmore Edwards, is a pleasant spot. Farther on the vast empty hotel comes as an oasis in a desert of ugliness. It stands in well-kept gardens, with a grand view up and down the river and all over the busy docks. I believe the pile-foundations are a wonderful piece of work, and that architects from all parts came to see it at the time the house was being built. Fairly close to it are two rows of houses, evidently designed by the same architect, for the higher officers of the docks. I had never seen the place before. On passing the policeman at the gate, who eyed us curiously, I was on new ground—and such interesting ground ! It seemed that my eyes were not capable of taking it all in.

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ALLAN LINER ENTERING TILBURY DOCK





## Northfleet to Tilbury Docks

As we came to the entrance a P. and O. steamer was being warped out. Outside, her two tugs, each flying the house-flag of the company, were waiting for the lock-gates to open. A crowd at the dockside was waving farewell. The looks on some of the poor faces that were being left at home brought a faint echo of the agony I had felt when parting with my boys at Southampton on their way to the War. The gates are now ajar, and the tow-rope tightens as the handy screw-tug thrusts a small Niagara of foam and dancing ripples from her. Slowly the great ship begins to move, stern first, towards the open river, sounding a long and loud blast on her siren. The second tug-boat backs in and gets hold of a hawser from the forecastle. Faster and faster come the three, until the flood-tide catches the after-end of the P. and O., swinging her gently round. The tugs pull harder, lying down as they waltz with the unwilling bulk of the liner, broadside on, right across the fairway.

The hawsers are like bars of iron ; and now the five hundred feet of steel is slowly sluing, until at last the head of the ship is pointing fairly down-stream. A tremor goes through the vessel as her own engines take up the tale—"Cast off!" She is no longer an inert mass. She is a living thing, throbbing in every pulse as she works her way eastward. The captain and officers on the bridge, the quarter-masters, the Lascars in blue and white coiling down the ropes, even the very passengers, seem to stand more stiffly. Unwillingly one draws a long breath, and turns to see what is

## London to the Nore

happening elsewhere. The lock has evidently been opened. It has let through about a dozen barges while we have been watching the liner. All these now begin moving. Most of them have their top-sails and fore-sails set, and one man, by leaning his whole weight on the tow-line, is beginning to move the first six or so in a solid mass. I cannot express how fine they looked—their rich deep-coloured sails against the soft pinky blue of the sky, and every inch reflected in the surface of the entrance. Most of these were fine spick and span barges flying the Goldsmith tri-colour flag. Then came a stumpy that might have been a hundred years old, right across the lock, barring the way to another five or six behind. As each barge arrived at the mouth of the entrance the brails were loosed and sheets pulled in; the wind filling the sails, they slipped away in the evening light, the high land of Gravesend, like castles in the air, forming a background.

The Master, I need hardly say, was making pencil notes of the lovely crush of craft as hard as he could, when, to my surprise, a dock policeman came up and said, "You must stop, please, sir. Drawing here is against the Company's orders, unless you have a permit." Making sketches of ordinary craft was against orders! If it had been forts, men-o'-war, or anything of that sort, the rule could be understood; but here the order seemed senseless.

We started walking again, along the edge of the basin. In one dry-dock about a dozen men were screwing on new blades to a big liner's propeller. In

## Northfleet to Tilbury Docks

another the ship was being painted. Every berth, apparently, was occupied. In the farther arms of the docks the huge Donald Curries seemed piled one above the other. It was like entering a hive of bees. All round men were working, some rowing great dumb barges full of coal; other barges were lying in tiers close to the lock-gates. The cranes, a maze of outstretched arms, and all reflected in the now glowing crimson water, gave one a very good idea of the huge commerce of our river.

The docks themselves are in the shape of a great three-pronged fork, with the handle the entrance. Each prong is a good quarter of a mile long; from the tip of the prong to the entrance the distance is about three-quarters of a mile.

Leaving through a gate other than the one we came in at, we walked briskly to catch the ferry to Gravesend. I wished to have another look at the fine old High Street before it became dark. The lights all round us were beginning to tell out against the gloomy water and the glowing sky. The three American cruisers that had looked rather gaudy by daylight, with their yellow-ochre top-sides, funnels, and ventilators, white sides and red bottoms, seemed now ethereal. The electric lights from mast-heads, the decks, and the tips of boat booms sparkled as so many glow-worms. Our little cruiser, the *Jason*, in her sober coat of dark grey, had melted completely into the darkness. Tug after tug was bringing up a little way below the pier.



## CHAPTER XII

### GRAVESEND TO EAST TILBURY



**G**RAVESEND High Street, to be appreciated properly, must be seen from the top. Two carts can hardly pass each other in the narrow cobble-stoned roadway. Every shop has a long black-board sign, with the owner's name and trade on it in gold, that juts out from the second or third story. The stores are chiefly nautical. The wares are hung out right over the narrow pavements with prices in large letters—"This fine oilskin only 4s. 6d."; and so on. At the end of the street is the pier; beyond is the river, with a peep of the craft as they go by. Sailors of all kinds and nations do their shopping up and down this street. The entrance to the municipal

## Gravesend to East Tilbury

buildings is flanked by the bank on one side and the police station on the other. From the gateway one has a long vista through a passage, with columns on either side, into the market-place, the whole being surmounted by the statues of Wisdom, Truth, and Justice.

Tilbury Fort did not make a very good subject from the water. We decided to go ashore for a better point of view. As soon as we had collected our gear, we were rowed to the pier, and walked along the cinder-dyke, where big works were going on. The reclaimed land was being raised with trucks and trucks of chalk for the foundation of what, I suppose, will be a station. About five minutes' walk along the dyke brings us to the World's End and the entrance to Tilbury Fort. Standing at the gate, we read on a big board, "No admittance." We wandered down the causeway close by. Though the sun was hot, there was a cold east wind, and on the causeway there is no shelter. At the top, however, we found a friend who had a watch-box full of telephonic instruments. Through a big telescope he reads the names of every collier that comes up the river, and telephones it on to Gravesend, where the intelligence is sent to the different owners in London. The man said he could not lend us a stool, but that the coastguard, who had a hut on the other side of the causeway in line with his, had one. We crossed to the hut, and a bluejacket said he would lend his with pleasure, and placed it alongside, as much in shelter as possible.

From this place the fort looked well, with its steep

## London to the Nore

rounded red roof of weathered tiles. The front is of grey-coloured stone. Over the entrance arch is an empty niche for a statue, flanked by classic columns, and outside are warlike emblems—guns, drums, Roman breastplates, helmets, and shields, all in high relief. An arched top with the Royal Arms crown the whole ; but on the top of this again nature has put in her finishing touch of wild flowers, grass, and old age, and the marsh foundation has given the whole a decided list to port. On either side are more high roofs peeping over the grass-grown earthworks, surrounded by high walls, which are in turn surrounded by a moat. Inside the walls are the uninteresting military married quarters. A new-looking road, with an avenue of small trees, and having broad bands of green grass on which the shadows of the embrasures of the two batteries of saluting guns cut darkly, leads up to the old gate. We are shown the room in which Queen Elizabeth was said to have slept on the memorable occasion when, clad in full armour, and riding on a white horse led by Essex and Leicester, Her Majesty delivered her stirring speech to the mar hoo of England in the days of the Invincible Armada.

Nothing can be more innocent than the appearance of East Tilbury from the water. The little church nestles among the elms, and the cottage gardens slope down to the river in a peaceful way. It is true that a great granite fort, built in the days of Palmerston, stands at the bottom of the village street, dominating the Lower Hope ; but this is carefully concealed with shrubbery

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TILBURY FORT





## Gravesend to East Tilbury

and clusters of poplars, and the stonework of the fort is tinted with sombre touches of green and russet, as if a great impressionist had come along with a huge palette and brushes, and had with pointiste touches merged the obtrusive fort into the surrounding landscape. Closer inspection reveals a deep moat and rows of ugly railings, whose many-pointed spikes curl in all directions. Between God's-acre and the river—in fact, close against the graves—is a row of range-finding chambers; and in a meadow hard by lie the obsolete Woolwich infants like a flock of sheep. Hidden in the turf opposite the village cobbler's shop, and just where a potato-patch ends, grins the long muzzle of a modern breech-loader. A little farther on among the cabbages is another on an elevating carriage, so that it can spring up, deliver its fire, and sink out of sight again.

As we walk up the street we find that from the infant schools to the modest Nonconformist chapel there is a row of deadly ordnance lying like snakes in the grass, high-velocity and flat-trajectory guns being strangely mixed with broccoli and brussels-sprouts. There is no doubt that this is a great improvement on the methods of the Merry Monarch. The peaceful and pious Evelyn came very near to strong language in describing the state of things in the old days. The Dutch lay within the very mouth of the Thames, so that nothing could stir out or come in; "and how triumphantly their whole fleet lay—a dreadful spectacle, as ever Englishman saw, and a dishonour never to be wiped off." He describes how five of His Majesty's



## London to the Nore

men-of-war encountered above twenty of the Dutch in the bottom of the Hope, chasing them with many broadsides towards the buoy of the Nore. "Having seen this bold action and their braving us so far up the river, I went home the next day, not without indignation at our negligence and the nation's reproach."

Between East Tilbury and Thames Haven lies a sort of no man's land. All the turnings to the right lead down to creeks or landing-places. "Mucking! Well, it's all muckings hereabouts," said the lady in charge of the railway. There is a tall red lighthouse on spindle legs, joined to the marsh by a little jetty. It winks a white light across the navigable river, but shows red across the mud-flats of the Lower Hope and Canvey Island. On the flat land are isolated farm-houses, often cut off from one another by winding creeks, and lower down there are creeks everywhere. Miles away from the river can be seen the red sprit-sails of the barges. Corringham, Fobbing, Pitsea—each has its creek that winds and twists like a family tree. Each has its little Norman church perched on hills overlooking the green marshes. Most of the creeks run into Hole Haven, which, after passing a great powder factory, bends sharply to the east at Benfleet, where a road crosses the creek at low water.

## CHAPTER XII

### VII. ON TO COOLING



**L**EAVING Gravesend, we passed the Customs House and a green battery, close to which stands the dear old Fort House in its high-walled garden, one end of which abuts on the dyke, with a lovely view of the river. Fort House itself is full of memories of gallant men whose feet have trodden the old uneven floors. Prominent among these was General Gordon, whose memory is ever green. Crossing the Esplanade, we came to the lock-gates of what was once the Thames and Medway Canal. Inside is a little basin mostly filled with laid-up yachts and lighters that have seen better days. The look of the place suggests decay. A cinder-path leads along the top of the sea-wall to a lonely public-house, the "Ship and Lobster"; and close by is the hospital for plague, cholera, and other deadly ills. Here also are many hulks, painted red and flying red flags, filled with

## London to the Nore

gunpowder. Outside these lie more craft—Norway timber barks, tramps, coasters, and liners out of work. Some are taking in powder and fly the red flag. A schooner, with her sails clewed up, is driving into a berth, dragging her anchor over the ground, and sheering now to port and now to starboard, as she works, stern-first, between the hulks. A girl with bright eyes and a Burne-Jones face stands and watches the vessel, which, I notice, belongs to this place. Dragging up-stream with an anchor is not a very speedy mode of progression, and the schooner seemed to take more time than usual; but the girl waited and waited, fidgeting with her apron from time to time. At last the skipper of the coaster thought he had reached a quiet spot. Paying out a lot of chain, he began to furl his sails one by one. There was a very small crew, and there were a great many sails: so this operation also took a long time. The girl waited on. Two seafaring youths came along and called out, "What's the use? She ain't coming into the canal dock to-night!" The girl threw up her head with a fine, scornful air, and answered, "Don't you believe it. I know my old man better'n you do"; and we left her waiting, confident of her old man.

Being rather weary, Beauty and I decide to sit for a while on the sea-wall, which keeps the Thames from overflowing Milton Marshes. On one side the calm river is dotted with countless vessels, and the tide is ebbing quietly. A great vessel up-stream has slowed down for a launch to board her, and pours forth a

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GRAVESEND





## Milton Ranges

column of steam that makes the whole air throb with its trumpeting. Now a graceful Trinity steamer, bearing on her deck buoys painted in stripes and chequers, slips out of the mist, and, steering round in a great circle, brings up head to tide, letting go her anchor with a splash and a rattle just astern of a fleet of red powder-hulks of all shapes and sizes. The hum of insects is everywhere. We hear the crack of cordite from Milton Ranges. These are built on what was once salt marsh, and even now the brackish ditches wind about, intersecting the different firing-points. We can see lines of men lying or kneeling, with little groups about thirty yards behind them, and an occasional officer or instructor whispering words of advice in the firer's ear. Farther along comes the stop-butt, stretching from the sea-wall to the railway, with its rows of targets continually bobbing up and down, each one carefully numbered and with large letters on the top of the butt, like some huge sky-sign, indicating the group to which the targets belong. At the firing-points the scene is varied. The marksman, distinguishable by the badge of crossed rifles on his forearm, confident that, although he may not make a possible, his score will be nothing to be ashamed of, lies down; and his position seems comfortable. He looks at the flags on the range and at the heat-mirage dancing in front of the targets; he holds up a wetted finger to determine the strength and direction of the wind; carefully adjusts his sights, referring to his scoring-book to do so; then, loading and putting the rifle to his shoulder, fires, having aimed with delibera-



## London to the Nore

tion. Turning over on his side, he remarks to his instructor, "I fancy that's all right." The target drops. Another comes up in its place, and a black disc rises under the bull's-eye. An inner low! He readjusts his sights, and we hope he will get the bull next time.

It is all most interesting. We move to the next group, evidently a batch of recruits who look as if they had never fired ball-ammunition before. Some kind chum in barracks has evidently been filling them with horrible stories of bruised shoulders and jaws. They are half afraid of their rifles. One jerks his head back and shuts his eyes as he pulls the trigger. The result does not count; and, I am sorry to say, everyone laughs.

Two miles farther on is Shornemead, where there is a little jetty for landing the deadly submarine mines; also a rusty small-gauge tramway that leads into the fort, which, though surrounded by high walls and spiked railings on the land side, puts on an air of rustic simplicity, nestling among poplar trees, as you look at it from the river. On the marshes can still be traced the old British Way which led from the woods of Cobham down to what must have been a much wider and shallower Thames than the one we know. I imagine there was a ferry of wickerwork coracles across the Lower Hope, the point of which is now the waterman's limit down the river, and the blue dye of our ancestors must have become rather streaky while crossing in breezy weather. We know that dead chiefs were buried by the side of the old ways, and three or four

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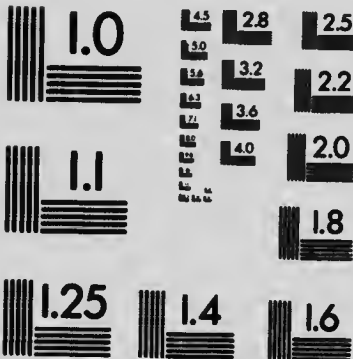
## Milton Ranges

years ago a most interesting discovery was made by the side of this one. In a field known as Great Bargrave, near Chalk Church, a large ring had been noticed in the corn, especially during a dry season, the corn growing much more luxuriantly upon this circle, which measured sixty-one feet across, than elsewhere in the field. The Hon. Arthur Bligh often referred to it in correspondence with Mr George Payne, F.L.S., F.S.A., and it was arranged that some day they would discover the cause of the peculiarity. The matter remained in abeyance until recently, when Mr Scriven, the agent of the Cobham estate, made a trial-hole on the site of the circle, and found that it was a wide ditch cut out of the solid chalk, which had been filled up with rubble and flints. Mr Payne was informed, and a systematic research was begun. The trench was twelve feet wide across the top, diminishing to two feet six inches at the base, and six feet deep. In it were five human skeletons, lying on their sides in contracted positions; and at the same level were burnt flints split and cracked by heat, upon which rested a layer of charred wood-ash about four inches thick, containing fragments of animal bones, with teeth of deer, bos, and sheep; also a few fragments of purely Celtic pottery, thick, rudely made, and sprinkled with grains of flint, and a grain-crusher roughly fashioned from a piece of Sarsen stone. In the middle of the mound was another skeleton, lying on its side in a neatly-cut grave, doubled up with his hand under his head—evidently the chief. The Shorne barrow was probably swept away because



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## London to the Nore

it interfered with agricultural operations, and no doubt the same fate has befallen others. Two other rings are to be seen in the corn ; but these, as yet, have not been disturbed. In an old map of the deer-park at Cobham this defunct old way is shown as a road still in use.

At spring-tides the river in prehistoric times must have stretched right up to the white chalk cliff which gives its name to Cliffe at Hoo. A muddy creek still winds part of the way towards the old town, which was an important meeting-place for the monks in early Saxon times. Several councils were held there—the first called by Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, at which was present Ethelbald, King of Mercia, in 742 ; the second under Cynulf, also King of Mercia, in 803 ; and the third under Ceolwulf, his successor, in 825. Nowadays the cement-works here have cut away a great part of the hill on which the present village stands. A great fort guards the mouth of the creek, and below it, where the deep water is quite close to the edge of the marsh, a coastguard hulk is moored, so near to the short pier that one could almost jump aboard. Below this again the marsh is thickly studded with little huts and magazines stretching for miles, and surrounded by a fence of barbed wire.

Cliffe, at Hoo, has shrunk, and only its fine church remains as a monument of its former importance. The stately pile, dedicated to St Helen, has a chancel, nave, north and south aisles, and an embattled western tower. The living, which belongs to the Archbishop of

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**A TIDE RIP IN THE LOWER HOPE**





## Cooling Castle

Canterbury, is worth £1297 a year. It was held by William de Wellesley, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1350; by Heath, Bishop of Worcester, in 1543; and by Edmund Cranmer, Archdeacon of Westminster, in 1547. The enamelled paten belonging to this church is unique as an example of fourteenth-century plate.

A little farther inland, and to the eastward of Cliffe, stands Cooling, or Cowling Castle, right on the edge of the marshes, with the ditch that feeds the moat running and twisting for over two miles down to the sea-wall. The two strong crenulated towers flanking the gateway and fronting the road are perfect. Over the arch the following inscription was cut in the stone by order of John de Cobham during the reign of Richard the Second :—

“ Knoweth that heth and shall be  
That I am made in help of the contre  
In knowing of which thing  
This is charter and witnessing.”

Alongside the gate-tower stands another small gateway, in the deep recess of the wall, which leads towards the chapel; the path goes to the higher ground by terraces and steps. The chapel is a small place, with columns not more than five feet high, from which springs the vaulted roof cut out of chalk. Near the chapel is a curious chamber half underground, probably part of one of the dungeons, in which are three windows unique in shape. No one can see in or out; light filters through. All the ivy-covered broken battle-

## London to the Nore

ments are built of chalk rubble faced with hewn stone. Along the south and east the corner towers alone remain, surrounded by the moat, on the calm surface of which float the open calyces of white water-lilies. The keep and main buildings of the castle, north and east of the chapel, were encircled by an inner moat, which is now intersected by little islands covered with Kent roses, and joined by rustic bridges to the mainland.

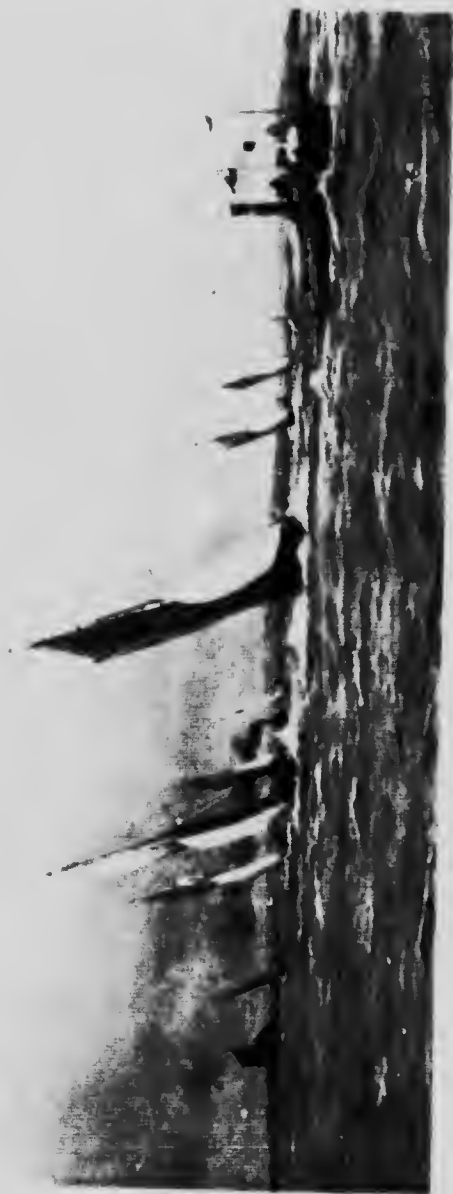
Cooling was held by the Cobhams from the days of Edward the First ; and passed by their heiress Joan to Sir John Oldcastle, whom Shakespeare had ridiculed in the person of Sir John Falstaff. No doubt, as Hepworth Dixon writes, this false Sir John was the creation of those monks and friars against whom the true Sir John had waged his manly fight. Those friars would naturally endow their assailant with the ugliest vices, and it was in this degraded repute that the name of Oldcastle was handed down. Shakespeare was not content with striking out the name of Oldcastle and substituting that of Falstaff. In his epilogue in the second part of *King Henry the Fourth*, he states that "Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man." This lord, who was depicted by the one party as so vicious, was known by his own and in his own home as the good Lord Cobham. After his rescue from the Tower, into which he had been cast on account of his faith, he wandered about at liberty for more than four years, defying the united powers of Church and Crown, and sheltered from pursuit by poor folk whom he

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SEA BEACH





## Sir John Oldcastle

had taught, who loved him greatly. The thousand marks set on his head, and the privilege offered to the city that should give him up to the King, were not sufficient inducement to make these folk turn traitor. He is described as "a high, swift sort of man ; full of fight, keen of tongue, kind to the poor, impatient with the proud ; a man of tough English fibre and of old English spirit." In the end the friars were base enough to buy him from a Welshman named Powis, who had won his friendship and was ready to betray him. Made prisoner after a desperate fight, wounded and weak, he was taken to the Tower. Without a second trial, he was hanged and burnt in St Giles' Fields.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE BLYTHE SAND AND MARSHES



ON the south side of Sea Reach are broad marshes indented by two big bights, Egypt Bay and St Mary's Bay. To see these at high-water spring-tide, with the transparent wavelets breaking gently on the dykes, gives one an exaggerated notion of the width of the Thames. The air is so sweet and the sky so blue that we decide to take our walk along the little winding paths through the marshes. The grass all round is a brilliant yellow, sun-dried and bleached ; the ditches on either side of the path reflect the intense blue of the sky, and form bright twisting streaks of colour from which rise family parties of wild duck. The inquisitive cows come across from a long distance to see who we are and what we are doing ; the sheep, after a momentary stare, graze

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ST MARY'S MARSH







## The Blythe Sand and Marshes

quietly, following in each other's footsteps, wearing a maze of small tracks across the marsh—all of which was once salt and covered every spring-tide. The old creeks remain as large winding pools or rich brown withe-beds. One of the pools leads to a decoy into which the wild duck are lured, between lines of nets, by their more educated kin; and are finally captured in a net-cage.

When we last stood on the sea-wall, we saw Langdon Hills, far inland in Essex, their heads bright and clear against the sky, and, nearer, the lower hills of Stanford-le-Hope, Mucking, and Pitsea. Mucking pile-lighthouse, with its little jetty and the keepers' houses, was cut out in bright vermilion against them. The great petroleum reservoirs of Thames Haven, every spar of the paraffin ships, stood out as distinctly as in a photograph; and opposite Hole Haven every detail of the schuuts and coastguard station. Now the wind has shifted to the west, and a thick brown London fog is stealing down. The tide has ebbed away, and where a short time ago was the sparkling water studded with bright sails and busy steamers nothing remains but a wide expanse of mud-flat stretching away into the mist. The sound of a dismal bell comes from the direction of Mucking. All round us the steamers call and answer one another, sounding their sirens and whistles. One, coming down the Lower Hope, strikes a musical key like the sound of a huge humming-top. The sharp hoot of the tug strikes against the great bass note of the liner, the tooting of

## London to the Nore

the barges' horns, and the tinkling of the anchored schooners' bells—a whole world of cautiously moving and anchoring craft.

In St Mary's Bay one can still see bits of the old salt marsh which once stretched from the hills of High Halstow to Pitsea, in Essex, five miles away, with the river winding between. By comparing the levels of the marsh inside and outside the wall, one can see how each recurring tide has, by leaving its sediment among the short grass of the saltings, gradually raised their height, until now they stand considerably above the level of the embanked land; but, whilst every tide raises the height, the waves, washing against the little cliffs, cut it into jagged shapes, so that what the river builds up in one direction it takes away in another. Out on the flat can be seen marine plants, each gathering its little pile of mud, beginning the foundations for the salting that is to be. In odd corners the stormy waves have washed up ridges of cockle-shells, which the farmers use to fill up drains in fields miles inland. (That will puzzle the geologist some time!) All is very dismal and weird. Not a soul is to be seen; and the fiercely worded notice-boards, threatening unwary persons with dreadful penalties should they go near the magazine, seem unnecessary.

In line with the Middle Blythe buoy on the Essex shore the river opens and divides the Island Convennos, which is the Counos mentioned by Ptolemy, and now called Canvey. In early days it ran along the confines of Essex for five miles—from Leigh to Hole Haven



HOLE HAVEN





## Canvey Island

—some part belonging to the Church of Westminster ; but the land was so low that it was often all submerged except a few of the highest hillocks, which served as a retreat for the sheep. Of these there were some four thousand fed on the island. Old Camden mentions that he had observed young men milking the sheep. Cheese of ewes' milk was made in the little dairy-houses or huts, called "wiches."

I have never heard larks sing as they do on Canvey Island. The air is full of their music, dozens soaring into the sky from the short dry grass. It does not seem long since we first sailed in here in our French-built yawl. The moment we had anchored a coast-guard pushed off in his boat and came along, to know if he could do anything for us. He was the handsomest man I have ever seen—with bright curly hair, sunburnt face, and blue eyes. He admired my baby, and said we were bringing him up young to the sea. His wife could do anything. She could wash and get up baby's clothes wonderfully if I wished. He left us with an order for potatoes, milk, and the baby's frills—to the hulk which was then the station ;—and then, as now, the larks seemed to sing any joy as, proud and happy, I walked up and down the dyke with my little one in my arms. This seems yesterday, but was twenty-four years ago.

Then, when we left town and went to live at Hoo, Hole Haven was a half-way house to us. When racing at Erith, it was a long day's sail with the ebb down the Medway, the short-cut through the Jenkin



## London to the Nore

Swatch, and the flood up to Erith. We raced our three rounds of the circular course or the long course to the Middle Blythe and back, and so for home. As it got dark or rough we used to run into the haven, anchor up, and crave a bed at the "Lobster Smack." It was not very encouraging to be told by the proprietress that she did not like ladies—"they always wanted so much attention"—but on our being meek, and gently inquiring into her maladies—which were many—she would thaw, give us a huge meal, a comfortable bed, and dry our clothes.

Even in this quiet spot one sees the hand of time. Fronting the Thames is a huge board advertising desirable lots for sale. A little farther on is an hotel, which in this weather must be pleasant. The Swatchway, with its hundreds of barges moving to and fro, can be seen, and every ship that goes up and down the Thames. The air is lovely. Little spaces of clean shell lie between the seaweed-covered stones. The "Lobster Smack" is still at the entrance to the haven. A little farther up is the spick and span station of the coastguard. A picturesque adjunct to the creeks are the eel-schuits, which have come to this haven for centuries laden with fish from Holland for the London market. The smell of burning peat is wafted from their galleys. I have only to close my eyes for a moment to fancy that we are coasting along their own low-lying polders, where the same fragrance had floated across the water. Their bluff bows are quite at home on the Thames. Their vanes fly gaily from



DUTCH EEL-SCHUTTS, HOLE HAVEN





## Canvey Island

the mast-head ; their varnished sides sparkle in the sunlight ; the head of the high rudder is resplendent with emerald green paint ; and every sail is carefully covered. Hanging along under their booms are rows of square nets ; towing astern are wicker eel-pots ; and alongside are the tanks in which the fish are kept alive. The tug waits to tow each vessel in her turn to Billingsgate. I should think the island feels homely to the men. Dutchmen reclaimed and dyked it round in the same way in which they treated their own land.

Run to the top of the dyke and look. Below you is a broad ditch full of reeds and water ; beyond are fields and newly-cut hay. The farmer, taking advantage of this fine spell, are hard at work on the stacks. Beyond, again, glow fields of mustard. Among tall trees stand the farms. In the garden of one is a round thatched house built by the Dutch long ago. There used to be several such houses ; but this is the only one left. In the distance rises the high ground and the ruins of Hadleigh Castle. A great work for the London poor, set on foot by "General" Booth, has been attempted here. In the creek lie boats of all kinds. Among them are small yachts full of young fellows thoroughly enjoying things. One lot has just asked for the loan of our dinghy to dredge for a lost anchor. There are old yachts and barges, and at stated intervals are moored the hulks full of explosives. A barge glides past with "Kinoch" on her sails : evidently she belongs to the big factory up the creek. The steamship *Marie of Glasgow*, with square red flag

## London to the Nore

at the fore, threads her way out through the small craft. At the mouth of the haven lies another big steamship, awaiting her cargo of explosives.

The sun is sinking. Afar off can be heard the thud of the *Belle* boat's paddles rushing home. The high ground on the Kent shore is turning grey. A mist from the river is enveloping the low ground. The deck is becoming damp. Thought of the warm cabin and of dinner recommends itself.

Certainly we have spent a lazy day. The scent of the hay, the song of the birds, and the hum of insects, have encouraged the disinclination to work ; and here we are—five o'clock !—still anchored off Hole Haven, and debating whether to run in, stay another night, and start early in the morning ; or to drop down as far as Southend with the ebb, and, as the tide turns, run into our own river and anchor at Port Victoria. The majority are for Southend and the Medway. Therefore, we set all sail, up anchor, and with the lightest of breezes work our way down Sea Reach, the junction of the river and the sea—

“ Where thy widening current glides  
To mingle with the turbid tides ;  
Thy spacious breast displays unfurled  
The ensigns of the assembled world.”

Soon Knoch's Hotel is behind us, and we slip past the lines of stone groins which jut out into the river all along the south shore of Canvey. Just by the Scars we see a poor old stumpy which has evidently been





WRECKED BARGE





## Southend

sunk some days. The water is washing idly in and out of her, and the large green flag and the wreck lanterns are hung out to warn passing craft away. Deadman's Point is just below. Then comes the tall gaunt beacon, built like a child's drawing of a doll in a crinoline, which has been named Our Lady of Canvey. The Chapman Lighthouse, mounted on spindle legs and painted bright red, slips by. On the Essex hills the rent and jagged towers of F'leigh Castle, once the home of the de Burghs, stands roofless against the sky ; then comes Lee, a cluster of red roofs among green elms, with a grey church tower and hundreds of fishing-boats. The red roofs gradually become new-looking as we pass along. West Cliffe, prosaic and commonplace, changes into Southend—all hotels and lodging-houses, electric tramways, and Salvation Army music—where the children build sand-castles and the sailing-boats carry East-End trippers to the sea.

Up-stream, a fleet of bawley boats comes driving down, dragging their trawls over the river-bottom. The trawl is a long purse-like net with a wide mouth extended by the beam, which is a stout spar about two-thirds of the length of the boat itself ; each end of it is shod with an iron runner somewhat in the form of a sledge. A stout chain served with rope joins the two runners ; and when the trawl is in use this chain drags along the bed of the river, gathering into the net which is fast to it everything that comes in its way. The rope by which the trawl is towed is knotted round the mast close to the deck. By pulling this rope forward

## London to the Nore

or aft the drifting bawley may be made to drive either broadside- or stern-on to the tide, altering her course as may be necessary to avoid driving foul of anchored craft. The sails are never completely set when the trawl is down. The main is brailed up, the top-sail hanging in a graceful festoon over the peak halliards. The bawley-man has a knack of lowering his jib half down, letting it hang over the bowsprit picturesquely. It is always a puzzle why it never gets loose. Any other man's jib would flap wildly, lashing the water with the sheets and winding them together into a hopeless tangle; but the shrimper's jib lies quiet. When it is time to haul the net up the fisherman lets go his brails and sheets his main-sail home. Then, passing the trawl-rope forward to the rigging, he gets his boat round head to wind, heaving in on the rope until he reaches the span. After this the net is pulled up to the side by hand. The contents of the purse, which is closely packed with shrimps, crabs, flounders, and green seaweed, are tumbled out on the deck. These are rapidly sorted, and the shrimps go straight into a big cauldron of boiling water in the middle of the boat. When cooked the shrimps are spread on a small net which is extended on poles from the side of the boat, and buckets of cold salt-water are thrown over them, to make them crisp and improve their colour.

If you row alongside and buy shrimps just at this moment, you will taste what a celebrated French *gourmet* describes as a dish worthy to be presented to angels. There was a happy day many years ago when

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# HADLEIGH CASTLE







## Shrimpers

we bought a bucketful in the Wallet off Clacton ; and Sherlock Holmes, had he been in chase, would have found no difficulty in picking up our trail, which stretched from the Wallet Spit way round the Maplin Light, past the Mouse, the measured-mile beacons on the Shoebury Sands, through the Warp, up Sea Reach, past smoky Gravesend, smiling Greenhithe, Long Reach, the Rands, the polluted waters of Barking Creek, the busy factories of Woolwich, to Blackwall. Along the whole of this winding course we left a track of shrimp heads and tails.

Down they come, bawley after bawley, some with red sails, some with grey, each with red bands painted across the sail from throat to leech, to save the chafe of the brails. The smell of a fleet of shrimpers is quite unlike that of any other fishing craft. There is none of the sickly, faded, fishy flavour. It is distinctly a good smell. The craft work right in the middle of the traffic, all among the liners, tramps, tugs, and barges.

Once upon a time, when the silver Thames ran clean and unpolluted, salmon, trout, shad, and whiting swam right up to London ; and the old City records are full of quaint laws and rules governing the fishermen. A great deal of fighting went on round the kiddles.

A "kiddle" was some kind of stake-net, which caught all fish coming down with the tide, both large and small ; and "Yantlet," where stands London Stone, marking the boundary of the jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor as conservator of the Thames, and cutting off the head of the peninsula between the Thames and the Medway,

## London to the Nore

which forms the tip called Grain into an island, was the creek where the Mayor, taking his courage in both hands, attacked the men of Kent, and in doing so defeated the malpractice of the Warden of the Tower. In the Great Charter there is a special clause against these nets, King John consenting, among other things, that under pain of excommunication all kiddles should be removed from the Thames and from his other streams. Unfortunately, the Warden of the Tower claimed the right to place kiddles in the river, not only by the Tower Wharf, but also in any other part of the stream; and rented to others this privilege, making it a very paying perquisite; so that the man who could afford it stretched his nets to the prejudice of the poorer fishermen and the destruction of the fishery. The Wardens clung to their privilege through many reigns; but a record battle against them was fought when Henry the Third was king. Information was given to the Mayor, the Sheriff, and other magistrates that many new kiddles had been laid in the Thames and the Medway, more especially in "Yenlet" (or Yantlet) Creek. The position was difficult for the Mayor. Though the Thames lay under the jurisdiction of London, it was not clear that the Mayor with his trained-bands had any right to pursue the offenders up the Medway. However, Jerdon de Coventry and a body of well-armed men decided to make the attempt. On January 6, 1236, they raided Yantlet Creek, where they caught the master fisherman and his servants, and thirty kiddles staked out towards the sea. The nets

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PADDLERS, SOUTHBEND-ON-SEA





## The Unlawful "Kiddle"

were torn up ; and the captured masters—Jocelyn and four good men of Rochester, seven good men of Strood, three good men of Cliffe, all master mariners, with nine others—were taken to London and lodged in Newgate. One can imagine the uproar that this caused in Rochester, Strood, and Cliffe. Men from these towns rode to London to see what they could do for their friends. They applied to the King for help, saying that no man had power to seize his subjects by force without his licence. The King was inclined to take their side ; but the Mayor and Sheriffs considered it necessary to maintain the laws of the land and the City franchise, and would not give in. Henry, being at the time away from London, sent a writ to the Mayor, commanding him to accept bail for the appearance of the prisoners until he should be able to hold a court to try the case. Later, Jocelyn and the master mariners were brought before the Archbishop of York, the Lord Chancellor, and other great men. William de Raleigh, an ancestor of Sir Walter, tried the case for the Crown, and asked the Mayor, Andrew Buckrell, how he had dared to seize the King's liegemen in their boats and cast them into a common jail. Buckrell answered, with much warmth, that he had seized the men for just reasons, because, having been taken in the act of using kiddles, "they were infringing the rights of the City of London, lessening the dignity of the Crown, and incurring the ban of excommunication in accordance with an express clause in the Great Charter." William de Raleigh took this view of the case. He ordered



## London to the Nore

Jocelyn and the other masters to pay a fine of ten pounds each. A great fire was lighted in Westcheape, and the nets were burned amid joy and shouting.

Matters went better after this. An entry in an old book runs : "For it appereth that from the time of King Henry the Third and so downwards the Lord Mayor hath removed kiddles, wears, trucks, and other unlawful engines, and punished the offenders. Sometimes by imprisonment, sometimes by fines and by burning of unlawful nets." The rules for the fishery of the Thames and the Medway were strict. One marvels now at the variety of fish that came up these rivers. In the Orders of the year 1584 we find : "No salmons to be taken between the nativity of our Lord and St Martin's." "Kipper salmons" were not to be taken at any time of the year. Trout were to have sanctuary between Michaelmas and Christmas. "Item : That no such person shall draw, work, or land any net for salmons of a lesser assize than three inch to the maing. Item : That no trinck shall stand to fish for whittings till the Ember week before Michaelmas yearly, and to come no higher than Purfleet, and to have the hose or cod of his net full inch and a half, and upon Saturday sunset to wash off his net, hale up, and go home, and not return to his labour again till Monday morning daylight, and so likewise shall every fisherman do from London Bridge westward to Gravesend in the east, and not otherwise.

"Imprimis : You shall faithfully and truly prevent (without any respect) all such persons, fishermen, and

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NEAR ST MARY'S





## Old Fishery Rules

others as do profane the Lord's Sabbath in their unlawful fishing and going forth that day to their labour.

"Item : That no trawler shall fish above Hole Haven on the north side and Porsing on the south side till a fortnight after Michaelmas yearly.

"Item : That no trawler do stay abroad to fish after Whitsuntide against Wednesday market till Bartholomew tide yearly ; nor that no trawler do fish in Tilbury Hope upon the Saturday after sun rising, but to wash off, hale up, and go home as all other fishermen ought to do according to the old and ancient customs of the River of Thames and Waters of Medway.

"You shall further enquire what royal fishes have been taken within the jurisdiction and royalty of the Lord Mayor of London, as namely, whales, sturgeons, porpusses, and such-like."

In the winter big smacks go out into the Black Deepes and other unfrequented waterways, and at anchor fish for sprats ; these are tumbled in bulk into the hold, and the bawleys sail out and load them by the ton. There is no attempt to keep them fresh, as no one eats them ; and the evil-smelling freight is carried up some winding creek into the heart of Kent and sold as manure to the farmers. What waste it seems that all these millions of living creatures should be destroyed just to fatten the soil ! What a contrast to the protection of the Middle Ages !

Another unsavoury fishery is that of the five-finger dredgers, which drag iron frames covered with net over the sea-bottom, and load day after day until they are

## London to the Nore

quite full. A quaking mass of slimy star-fish is then landed at some up-country wharf, and carted away to the ploughed land.

While we have been discussing fishermen past and present and the old laws of the river, our barge has been slipping quietly down the stream. The Jenkin buoy seems to rise out of the twilight, and comes towards us with a rakish swirl and a dip as we drift into the Swatchway, a narrow short-cut between the Nore sand and the flat island of Grain. The mists of evening soon blot out all the distance ; and so, prodding at the mud with a long boat-hook, we feel our way along the flat, the lights of anchored craft shining brightly for a moment as we pass, and then falling into the fog astern. "Luff a bit—it's getting rather shallow," says the Skipper, lifting his pole out of the phosphorescent water. "That's right now—it's deeper—keep her so." By and by we reach Grain edge, and turn the corner into the Medway, running slowly in against the tide, sounding all the way. "There's the buoy on the causeway end. Keep outside it." The stars shine here and there above the mist and help us to keep our course ; the water is deep close to the west shore ; and soon we are slipping past the black piles of Port Victoria, then past the Royal Corinthian Club-house, a blaze of light reflected in the placid water studded with racing boats and cruisers, the large yachts outside, and beyond them the mass of the great coal-hulks. Lights twinkle in bewildering confusion everywhere. On board one of the anchored craft a

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R.C. CLUB-HOUSE, PORT VICTORIA



R.C. Club House  
Port of Spain  
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## The Medway

gramophone is grinding out a comic song, and the dismal strains of a concertina wail into the night from the forecastle of a yacht. Quietly we thread our way up-stream. The craft are just swinging to the young flood. In the far distance we can hear the clinking of windlasses and the rattle of chains as unseen barges weigh their anchors. Now we pass between the lines of the gunboats supporting the boom, and the giant hulls of the battleships and four-funnelled cruisers stand up black against the stars. As we follow the winding river there is always a gas-buoy ahead, winking at us through the mist.

A voice comes from the cabin : "Do you know it's past twelve and time for all good people to turn in?" The hint is a good one : so we bring up, and very soon silence is over all.



## CHAPTER XV

### COCKHAM REACH TO THE NORE



**W**HAT a day for a water party! The scrubbing on deck has roused us all. The sun is shining; there is a fine fair wind from the west; the river is blue and calm. As soon as breakfast is over, we start off in a body to the house to fetch things we want. The wood is lovely in its full dark-green summer

foliage; great branches of delicately scented wild roses stretch across the little path that rises with many steps; the trees on either side are encircled with long tendrils of honeysuckle that spread out as they reach the top, covered in pale yellow bloom which fills the air with a warm sweet smell. The birds are singing from every bush and copse. As we pass through the gate and let it slam behind us, rabbits bolt down the meadows

## Cockham Reach to the Nore

in hundreds, their tails flicking in the sunshine as they scamper into their burrows. The rooks are cawing and flying round in great circles over the tall elms. Home is the best place in all the world. Cook has done her duty nobly. As we reach the crest of the hill we meet the maids and men from the kitchen quarters filing down with baskets, barrows, and bottles, on their way to the beach. It does not take long to have a look-round, collect the letters, and pick a big bunch of flowers. Nurse comes down so laden that she cannot possibly carry Baby : so he falls to my lot, and we start on ahead, perfectly happy in each other's company, and are on board again just in time to receive our friends who have come down in their launch from the dockyard.

It is not much use starting down the river before the tide turns, and the moment is opportune for bathing. The tide is flowing. We go into the water for a frolic. The boys are capital swimmers ; Grey, in particular, puts our hearts into our mouths as he dives from the cross-trees, though probably his double somersault from the deck is the most difficult. Beauty swims round like a mermaid, her hair curling tighter than ever with the salt spray, and a grand colour in her cheeks. Our military friends are not so expert, and just swim straight out and back to the beach ; but the Colonel's wife is lovely. Not being (so to speak) born to the water, she uses the boat-house robing-room and steps gingerly across the pretty beach to the edge, where she is greeted with a shout of laughter from us

## London to the Nore

all. Being of sporting tastes, she had suggested this party ; but some of the ladies of the garrison, who are used to the English mode of bathing only, thought it would not be quite the thing. Thus, this dear dame, though perfectly clothed in a serge bathing-dress, had added the half of the Colonel's trousers to her own ; and I leave you to imagine the effect. We all feel quite exhausted by the time our laughter has subsided. The young ladies on board insist on a buoy being tied to a rope, lest danger should befall ; Nurse and the Princess do their best to comfort Spot, who thinks his mistress is drowning. As soon as we are all on board again the awning is furled and taken down, and the sails are set. We glide away gently before the wind, our boomed-out main-sail casting a little bit of shade on the upper-deck, where we congregate with rugs and cushions, Grey bringing out his viola and discoursing sweet music. The bathing-dresses hang up to dry in the rigging ; and the Colonel, though absent, is present to our minds in the additions to his wife's costume.

Luncheon ! Everyone is hungry, and the sight of the good things Cook had stowed away for us awakens sharp pangs. The cloth is laid on the upper-deck, and all bear a hand with salmon, pies, lamb, salad, sweets, and fruit. There is silence for a short space. Just as we are finishing the Master looks up and says, "Hullo ! there's a bawley. Who says shrimps for tea ?" The young officers spring up and volunteer to waylay the boat. Our barge is scarcely moving through the water : so the dinghy is lowered, and away they go,

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BARGE RACE: RUNNING OUT TO THE MOUSE





## Cockham Reach to the Nore

pulling for all they are worth. As the distance gets greater we notice they are not making for the bawley at all, but are going towards a barge. What the bargee says to them when they ask for shrimps we cannot hear ; but it is something pithy, no doubt, for they drop off and overtake the next. Our Skipper's face is a study as he remarks, "They don't seem to know the difference—do they?" We fancy the bargees are sending them for fun to the next barge. After watching them call at some four vessels, we shout to them, "Come back ! Never mind ! The wind is freshening ! You won't catch us !" Poor young fellows ! They have pulled with a will, and are very hot when they are again alongside, and exclaim as they climb on deck, "We are so sorry, but the boats had no shrimps." "It does not matter a bit," we answer. "Come along into the shade." Skipper helps them up, and spits reflectively over the side as he walks aft to the wheel with a shake of his head.

We have just enough wind to take us out to the Nore. The men on board have evidently been watching us from afar. They have their landing-net ready as we come round close to them. We drop many newspapers into it. "The Nore Light" is a great strong vessel painted red, with the name in white letters, some six or seven feet high, along the side. Her mast stands in the middle of the ship, surmounted by a red ball and a big lantern, with the machinery for the revolving light built round the mast. At night this is hove up to the hounds. A wonderful ray it

## London to the Nore

sends quivering round the horizon, lighting up for a moment the passing ships, which appear like ghosts and vanish. A horn is sounded in foggy weather, and a gun is fired when vessels are seen to be standing into danger. The sand-bank of which it marks the eastern end stretches away to the west, nearly up to Yantlet Creek. Just at this moment we can see the hard yellow sand standing some two feet out of the water ; red-, yellow-, and black-sailed barges are filing down through the narrow channel which separates the Nore sand from the Kentish shore, and is called the Jenkin Swatchway. Why Jenkin, I wonder ? This waterway, though used by thousands of barges, has never had more than one buoy at either end : so in the dark it is necessary to feel one's way by sounding. A pair of gas-buoys would be a blessing here. Just think how beautifully lighted and buoyed a channel of this sort is in France or Holland ! More traffic goes through this Swatch in the course of a month than comes to many famous foreign seaports in a year.

From here we can see the whole estuary of the Thames. The long narrowing funnel of Sea Reach stretches away for fourteen miles up to Mucking flats and those faint blue Langdon Hills in the extreme west. On the north side of the Nore there is another procession—light colliers bound for Newcastle, Sunderland, or Blythe ; bluff-bowed Norwegian barks—right before the wind. County Council yachts—as the sewage steamers are called—are steaming to the Knob channel, where they will dump their unsavoury cargoes,

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BARGE RACE OFF SHOE BURYNESS







## Cockham Reach to the Nore

and then return, standing high out of the water. A dainty schooner with jackyard top-sail and silk spinnaker—a perfect lady—glides quietly with the throng. Excursion boats, reeking of cheap cigars and patchouli, come panting down to the music of a fiddle and a harp, leaving a thick black cloud of smoke and a tumbling wake which rushes fiercely at us, rolling our sprit from side to side, buffeting the lee-boards, and spinning the wheel; and then goes dashing on to jog up the next comer. To the north-west there is the "Chapman," a red pile-lighthouse; beyond it are the flats of Canvey Island and the hills of Benfleet, Leigh with its grey tower and red roofs, West Cliffe, and Southend, the pier, a mile and a quarter long, stretching out across the mud.

The low point to the north, where the heavy guns are sending the shells bounding over the yellow sands, is Shoeburyness. Those are the Shoebury buoys close to the steep edge of the flat, and that jagged green and black object is the wreck of an old bark which long ago ran on Blacktail Spit. There are the bones of many a stout vessel sticking up half buried and grown over with green weed on the Maplin Sands, which stretch away for nineteen miles. We behold the beacons of the measured mile beyond the old wreck, where the men-o'-war and torpedo-boat destroyers run their steam-trials; and if you sail past them you will come to the Mouse Light and the West Swin, which is the main channel for the North Sea and the Baltic. There are the masts and funnels of the hull-down leaders of the procession

## London to the Nore

of vessels which is ever steaming towards the open sea. To the east, the muddy water, which looks so serene and unruffled, dotted with smacks and bawleys, is really a network of shoals and sand-banks ; the Ooze stretches diagonally right across the path, and south-east of it are the Red Sand and The Gillman. To the south is the Middle Ground and the Spile ; the four-fathom channel winds between these and the Spaniard and Cant. The faint line of land narrowing almost to a point is the country at the back of Herne Bay and Reculver. I daresay that, if we climbed to the top-mast head, we might get a glimpse of distant Thanet, which is invisible from the deck. The dark red cliff which stretches from Warden Point to Minster in Sheppey is always slipping down into the sea ; and every year the island shrinks as the waves wash the soft clay away to build the foundations of prospective continents at the bottom of the ocean.

As the tide turns we again glide in towards Sheerness. The river is an oily calm. The sun is shining with such intensity that it is painful to look at the water. We dritt in close to Garrison Fort, from the top of which the arms of the semaphore wave in quick short jerks. The harbour is full of battleships and cruisers, their gay colours flying and sun-kissed brass-work scintillating. Bugles call and whistles shrill. We steer so as to pass close to the *Endymion*, lying off Blackstakes. The *Illustrious*, in the inner berth, is coaling from the old *Tourmaline*, an ancient corvette, now used as a coal-hulk bearing the Temperly trans-



## ROUNDING THE MOUSE





## Cockham Reach to the Nore

porters, which look like a set piece for a display of fireworks. She has two masts with four large derricks, to the ends of which are slung thick steel posts with flanges at the top and the bottom. On the lower flange is a small trolly, worked backwards and forwards by wires run over sheaves on the ends of the posts. To these trollies hang the bags of coal, which run up the railway on the lower flange of the joint over the ship and into the bunkers. From the bridge a man with two flags signals when to lower or to heave up, and on the battleship's port-side is another collier. The crew look like Christy Minstrels, so begrimed are they with coal-dust. Everything on board that can be covered is wrapped in canvas, including the bridge and guns. All the ship's boats are moored off in a long line to a buoy to windward, beginning with the pinnace and ending with the gig. From her mainyard flutters a string of small flags—a sort of confession to the rest of the fleet of the number of men she has absent without leave.

Next we come upon the six obsolete gunboats that are permanently moored across the river from a little above Port Victoria to the mouth of Stangate Creek. The boom consists of four steel wires supported by floats between the ships, with the lower wires snaked to the upper ones, so that when the boom is in position the wire looks some six or eight feet above the water, besides the portion submerged, forming a tremendously strong barrier right across the Medway, a barrier that no torpedo boat could pierce. At either end the boom is defended by batteries of long guns on the banks, aided



## London to the Nore

by powerful search-lights. Ships of the Reserve Fleet, with nucleus crews on board, are moored above the boom, for emergency.

Though this drifting is delightful, it is evident that we shall not get home until late. Our Colonel's wife, who is going out to dinner this evening, is counting up the chances of being ready at the appointed time; but when sailing one is so much *à la volonté de Dieu* that whistling for a wind is the only recourse. Tea is the next thing. It is wonderful how the marshes on either bank have slipped past when once again we turn our attention to the river. Long Reach and the Lower and Upper Mussel Bank buoys are astern, and we are just drifting round the fort into Gillingham Reach, where the fertile land rises from the marsh. Trees and orchards embower the old farmhouse called East Court, built by William Pynester, clerk and surveyor under Queen Elizabeth, who has left his initials and the date 1603 over the entrance-door of the pretty low house with leaded casements; and there are delicate sweet-scented roses creeping and peeping into the lattice—an ideal home, a place of rest for a busy man. The cherry that was first brought out of "Pontus" into Italy six hundred and twenty years after the building of Rome, and one hundred and twenty years after into Britain, about the year of Christ 48, has grown and flourished here for centuries. The far-famed orchards spread right down to the salting along this shore, interrupted for a little way by a great cluster of cement-work chimneys emitting masses of curling

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**BOOM ACROSS THE MEDWAY: A LINE OF OLD GUNBOATS MOORED  
TO PROTECT CHATHAM DOCKYARD AGAINST TORPEDO ATTACK**





## Cockham Reach to the Nore

white smoke that hangs like a cloud. Then we go on by the old Manor of Grange, which forms an out-of-the-way part of Hastings. The present house is quite modern ; but in the grounds still stand two fragments of the old buildings—a small piece of the chapel built in Richard the Second's reign by Alderman John Philipott, a patriot who at his own cost maintained a thousand soldiers during the war with France ; and a tithe barn, a building similar to the chapel. In the old days the owners of the Grange were obliged to supply a ship with a crew, if called upon to do so, for the Navy, and had certain rights as to execution of fugitives from justice who might take shelter in the grounds owing to the land being abbey land ; and until comparatively recent times, when a warrant was issued for the arrest of a man by a Gillingham magistrate, if he managed to get into Grange property he could not be taken unless the local authorities obtained a warrant from Hastings in addition. The cherry orchards still go on as far as the causeway and a little beyond ; but a terrible thing is happening to the pretty old Gillingham we knew years ago. New Brompton, like a great octopus, has stretched and uncurled its horrible feelers of small yellow-brick houses in all directions, and the rural beauty of this place is doomed.

We notice that a battleship is in the act of starting from the South Lock. Grand she looks, in her sober grey, crowded with the nimble tars and sturdy marines. The officers on the fore-bridge have the preoccupied look that responsibility brings ; the two leadsmen

## London to the Nore

are at their stations, the lines coiled neatly, and the leads swinging just clear of the water; the signalmen on the after-bridge are holding an animated conversation in semaphore with some distant person out of sight from where we are. Two sturdy double-funnel paddle-tugs, the personification of strength and power, start gently off, tandem fashion, and tighten up the great wire tow-ropes; then the paddles begin to work in earnest, dashing successions of foaming breakers from them as they strain at the mass—fourteen thousand tons of armour, guns, coal, frames, and plates. Slowly the giant begins to stir. The warps to the docks are cast off, and long lines of bluejackets run off with them. As the battleship gathers way, the river begins to heave with a new force; for the twin-screws are turning, and the leadsmen throw far ahead into the foam of the toiling tug-boats. "Quarter less five," sings the man on the port-side as his lead touches bottom. Then the first tow-rope is slipped, and the leading tug falls out of line and stops. Splash! goes the second wire hawser, and round comes the paddle-boat clear of the ram. The grey hawse-holes, like a pair of malevolent eyes, seem to give a fiendish expression to the monster that glides closely past us. We are aware of many moving faces, gazing for a moment and then gone—faces at ports, faces on the forecastle; great anchors, booms, torpedo-nets; more faces looking down from the lofty bridge; the search-light bright and polished; the muzzle of many guns; grey boats, stanchions, derricks, masts, and fighting-tops, all sliding

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CHATHAM DOCKYARD: BATTLESHIP PUTTING TO SEA





## Cockham Reach to the Nore

past ; then the after-barbette and a group of officers near the long 12'4's. A string of bunting rises to the yardarm. It is like a rainbow. The scent of cooking, of new paint, of hot steam, and of oil, comes upon us almost in one whiff. As the wash breaks against our side, the stern-walk and grand trailing ensign move past, and the gold letters *Majestic* shine over the water churned by the twin-screws.

The steam-launch that has been waiting in front of the boat-house has caught sight of the barge, and comes half way to meet us ; our friends are transhipped ; the still air resounds with their farewells, and the last wave of a handkerchief is seen as they round the corner out of sight.

## CHAPTER XVI

### HOO ST WERBURGH AND CHATHAM FLEET



Hoo St Werburgh

**S**OVEREIGN REACH is the prettiest spot up or down the Medway. After Hoo Ness the river flows round a big bend over the mud-flats, forming at high water a charming bay, fringed by the Cockham Woods, which grow down a steep hill to the pebbly beach. At the edge of the wood stand the remains of the old brick

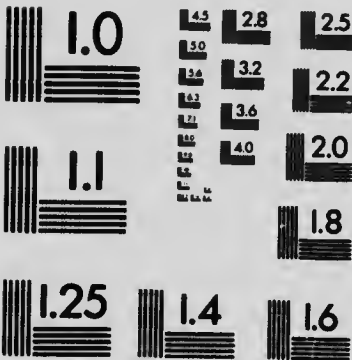
fort built in the time of Charles the Second, when, according to Gibson, a large addition of docks and storehouses was made at Chatham, "wherein are many conveniences unknown till of late, and all these so well fenced with new forts, such as those at Gillingham, Cockham Wood, the Swamp, etc." What remains is now overgrown with ivy and blackberries. At the

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SOVEREIGN REACH





## Hoo St Werburgh

foot of the wall the tide undermines and eats away the bricks, which are scattered far and wide on the shore. The hill has slipped, bringing with it the solid old powder-magazine, which has capsized and split into pieces. We like to think that this is the battery that Dickens mentions in *Great Expectations*—the place where Joe Gargery and Pip sat on fine Sunday afternoons and watched the ships go by.

The woods are beautiful in the early spring and summer. The Princess had a bunch of primroses sent to her on Christmas Day by the gamekeeper. Long before the ordinary spring the buds begin to peep in this warm southerly aspect. When the spring really comes, the ground is a carpet of flowers. Overhead, blackbirds, thrushes, nightingales, and other birds make night and day a joy under the wood. The varying moods of the river enhance the beauty of the scene. Many yachts bring up in this reach to hear the song of the nightingale in June.

No wonder that Gunning, whose father was the rector of Hoo St Werburgh, loved these woods, and knew every nook and cranny in them ; which served him in good stead later. Evelyn, in his *Diary*, mentions him as preaching against the Anabaptists on December 3, 1657. By Evelyn he was evidently much appreciated. In 1673 the diarist remarks that Gunning preached before the King admirably well, "as he can do nothing but what is well" ; and he took his son to Gunning, when he was Bishop of Chichester, to be instructed before receiving the Holy Sacrament.

## London to the Nore

Pepys also mentions him on January 1, 1659 : " Went to Gunning's chapel at Exeter House, where he made a very good sermon on these words—'That in the fulness of time God sent His Son, made of a woman.'" It appears he had continued to read the Liturgy at the chapel in Exeter House when the Parliament was predominant ; for which Cromwell often rebuked him. In the end he was hunted by Roundheads while at home with his mother at Hoo. He escaped by hiding in Cockham Woods, where his mother found means of furnishing him with food. During his life his love for the old home was great. When he died, in 1684, he bequeathed his own service of sacramental silver to Hoo Church, being at the time of his death Bishop of Ely. These vessels were used until just upon twenty years ago, when the late vicar took a dislike to them because of their weight (the flagon alone being seventy-five ounces), and in his ignorance sold this valuable old plate, putting in its place a flagon of glass with a silver band. The church is dedicated to *St Werburge*, now Werburgh, one of the earlier and more celebrated of the Anglo-Saxon saints. It was contemporary with the beginning of Christianity in Mercia, and closely mixed up with the first movement for the establishment of runneries in England. The saint's father was Wulfhere, King of the Mercians, who, though nominally a Christian, was not zealous ; but, under the influence of the Queen, all his children were earnest and devout believers.

This Princess displayed an extraordinary sanctity

## Hoo St Werburgh

from her earliest years. Though very beautiful, she decided to remain unmarried and to dedicate her life to Christ. Later, with her father's consent, she became a nun and entered the monastery of Ely. As a nun Wereburge soon became celebrated for her piety, and, according to the legend, her sanctity was made manifest by many miracles. In 675 Wulfhere's brother Ethelred succeeded him on the throne of Mercia. One of his first cares was to call his niece Wereburge from Ely, and entrust her with the establishment of nunneries in Mercia. In a very short time she founded religious houses for nuns at Trentham, Hanbury in Staffordshire, and Weedon in Northamptonshire, of all which she was Superior at the same time. She died at Trentham on February 3, 699, and by her own wish was buried at Hanbury. Years afterwards, when the Danes ravaged this part of the island, the body of St Wereburge was carried for safety from Hanbury to Chester, and deposited in the Abbey Church (now the Cathedral), of which thenceforth she was the patroness. There are eight other churches in England dedicated to this saint. Ours is mother-church to those of St Mary's, All Hallows, and High Halstow, all belonging to the long tongue of land that divides the Thames from the Medway. It is a pretty old church, with a very tall, graceful spire that forms a recognised landmark on the river—so much so that the Admiralty a few years ago sent forty pounds to help in repairing it. In the reign of King John, Robert Bardolph, then Lord of the Manor of Hoo, granted lands, in pure and perpetual

## London to the Nore

alms, to find one light to burn nightly before the altar of St Wereburge—

“None of your rascally dips, but sound,  
Good patent wax wicks, four to the pound.”

The present church only dates back to the decorated and-perpendicular period. There is a very fine example of a sedilia in the chancel. Also there are many brasses—the earliest to Richard Bayly, vicar, bearing the date 1412. Hasted, in his *History of Kent*, says that when the survey of Domesday was made the Hundred of Hoo possessed six churches, as now.

This must have been the churchyard that Dickens had in his mind when he described so vividly the meeting of poor little Pip with the fearful man, “all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg, a man with no hat and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head; a man who had been soaked in water and smothered in mud . . .”—who had escaped from the convict hulks and speaks so savagely of Pip’s heart and liver. The convict hulks used to lie in Sovereign Reach, opposite the battery; and only a few years ago, when the Royal Engineers were altering the magazine railway at Upnor, they cut through the burying-ground of these unfortunate malefactors, many of whom still had their rusty fetters firmly riveted round mouldering ankle-bones.

Before the time of the convicts there were other hulks, filled with prisoners of war, that lay in this

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## Hoo St Werburgh

reach—brave but unfortunate men captured during our long struggle with the French. Old Pocock, who used to shoot his seine for smelts on this beach, has told me how he remembered as a boy going off with his father to sell apples and pears to the prisoners, who were very clever with their fingers, carving wonderful models of ships out of beef bones, and rigging them with human hair. Two of these poor fellows tried to swim ashore one dark night, but were found stuck in the soft mud of Hoo flat after the tide had flowed over them. Like the other prisoners whose coffins we saw jutting out of the mud in Stangate Creek, hundreds were buried in the salt marsh that used to be St Mary's Island; but when the extension works of Chatham Dockyard were being carried out with convict labour these remains were collected and buried in a small graveyard. A monument with the following inscription was raised on the spot:—"Here are gathered together the remains of many brave soldiers and sailors, who have once been the foes, afterwards the captives, of England, who now find rest in her soil, remembering no more the animosities of war or the sorrows of imprisonment." They were deprived of the consolation of closing their eyes among the countrymen they loved; but they were laid in an honourable grave by a nation which knows how to respect valour and to sympathise with misfortune. Still, there seems a fate against these poor bones ever lying in peace. An Admiralty order for a new dry-dock came out, and again they had to be dug up and reburied in a

## London to the Nore

fresh place — a better one, in the grounds of the New Naval Barracks. One cannot help thinking, in our friendly relations with the Republic, that it would have been graceful to send them all to France in an English man-o'-war.

From the top of the hill overlooking Cockham Wood Beach stretches a grand panorama. Given a good glass and a clear day, we can see for miles. In the north-east the tip of Shoeburyness is just discernible, with its range-finding towers and water-tanks. Often great balls of smoke rise into the sky as the shrapnel burst over the Maplin Sands. The faint boom reaches us a long time after. To the right are the beacons of the measured mile; and on a very clear day you may see the lantern of the Maplin Lighthouse, some twenty-seven miles away. Then comes open sea, with, on the horizon, the black and white buoy of the West Ooze. The Nore is hidden behind the trees of the Isle of Grain; but the middle beacon and the flats to the east of the four-fathom channel stand up quite clear, and many a big liner have we watched steaming away down the Warp, shaping a course for the Shivering Sand buoy. The great granite fort at Garrison Point, the docks at Sheerness, and the men-o'-war at Black Stakes are all quite distinct. Due east the high land of Sheppey cuts the sky, and with the glass we can see the tracery in the windows of old Minster Church. Beyond it are East Church and Shurland, where dwelt the famous Ingoldsby baron who rode Grey Dolphin and called for his boots. A little more to the right are the

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BLACKSTAKES







## Hoo St Werburgh

flats of Iwade and the winding Swale ; in the dim distance Whitstable and the heights above Herne Bay ; still a little more round, Dunkirk, where the old Roman Watling Street runs straight as an arrow towards Canterbury. The ridge of Upchurch, renowned for its Roman potteries, and all the marshy islands and muddy creeks of the Lower Medway, are spread out like a map at our feet. South-east are the square church-towers of Newington, Rainham, and Gillingham ; behind them, against the sky, is the high backbone of the North Downs.

The uncouth square of masonry high above the ridge is the new house of Israel, built by the followers of a prophet, called White, a sergeant in the Life Guards, who took the name of Jezreel. The money for building this temple came mostly from America ; but the prophet died, and, the funds coming to an end, the building remains, like the Tower of Babel, roofless and unfinished. New Brompton is a mushroom town of acres and acres of commonplace little brick villas, all built to the same pattern, the homes of the thousands employed in the great dockyard and the married soldiers and sailors of the garrison. That broad patch of green with the tents, pavilions, and drilling troops is Chatham Lines ; and nearer still, crowning heights, are the barracks and other military institutions.

A spirited bugle-march comes across the water as the squads of bluejackets step out in their jaunty way to work among the grey monsters of the Medway Steam Reserve. From every direction the bugles

## London to the Nore

sound. One monotonous call is repeated at varying intervals all day long from every ship and barracks—

“You can be a defaulter as long as you like :  
You have only to answer your name.”

The men on the extension works are beginners who are sent out from the haunts of man to practise in solitude. Their five notes are breathed in cracked tones of all varieties, mixing up in the incessant quick clang of the hammers, which merges into one great sound, with an extra loud ringing blow every now and then.

Out in the stream, close to the bull nose of the South Lock, where the sliding caissons give access to the basins, lies the composite sloop *Champion*, moored stem and stern with heavy chains. Every day the young stokers are brought off to her to learn how to light up the fires and raise steam. The engines are started : she pants and tugs at her fetters, making a great swirl of foam, over which the seagulls soar, or into which they dive with a splash as the small fish and scraps of food come to the surface in the wake. It seems a waste of power and good Welsh coal.

Boom ! goes the twelve-o'clock gun from Prince William's Bastion, and a small cloud of smoke blows away. The dockyard bell, mounted on the top of a high mast, clangs noisily ; the church clocks, hooters, and ships' bells join in the clamour ; the hammers stop ; and, like an army of ants, the men stream out from everywhere, converging into a great black stream at

## Hoo St Werburgh

the dockyard gates. Fires are kept up all the year round on the island, burning the litter and paint-scrapings from the shipyards ; and in the warm evenings, as the darkness falls, the Will-o'-the-wisp flashes its flames from the stagnant water, and out on the mud-flat rises and falls uncannily.

There is no need to ask which way the wind is blowing. One sniff outside settles that point. East brings the smell of the brickfields ; south-east the scent of the gasworks at Gillingham, said to be good for whooping-cough, but otherwise objectionable ; from the south comes the unmistakable odour of paint-scrapings and new paint in the fitting-out basins ; from south-west, that of the cement, which, with all its shortcomings, has certainly banished ague from the low-lying flats and levels of the Hundred. Thus the old rhyme—

“He who comes into the Hundred of Hoo,  
Will find fever, and ague, and dirt enou’,”

—is no longer applicable. The fever is gone, and the roads are as fine as any in England.

From our point of vantage on the hilltop we look right down upon the dockyard, and can see a great deal more of what goes on than the Admiral-Superintendent in the old Jacobean house, surrounded by tall sheds and busy factories. Starting from the north entrance, I will try to describe the ships in sight in the three great basins, and the buildings and ships adjacent.

## London to the Nore

First come the two tall chimneys of the engine-houses, where the hydraulic power is generated for pumping out the docks, drawing away the caissons, and turning the capstan. It is wonderful to see the quiet way in which this terrific force is applied. A man pulls a handle, and immediately the obedient capstan begins to turn, winding in the great steel hawsers, and hauling battleships about as if they were so many toys. In the repairing basin, stripped for an overhaul, is the *Blenheim*, protected cruiser, which, along with her sister-ship the *Blake*, was built in 1890 to go one better than the Russian cruiser *Rurik*, which made rather a stir at the time of her launch, but now lies at the bottom of the Sea of Japan, sunk by Admiral Kammura. So much has cruiser construction developed in the last few years that the *Blenheim* and the *Blake* are already half-obsolete, the destruction of the *Variag* having proved that a protected cruiser, with her gun-crews exposed, cannot fight her battery for many minutes under modern shell-fire. Thus the life of this class of vessel in our service will probably be very short: only four six-inch guns out of ten in the secondary battery have proper armour protection. With her twenty-one thousand four hundred horse-power, the *Blenheim* was able to steam twenty-two knots, a great performance at the time. She brought home from West Africa the body of Prince Henry of Battenberg.

We have only to look at the new armoured cruiser *Devonshire*, which lies under the shear-legs completing for sea, to note the great difference in construction. A

## Chatham Fleet

belt of armour, tapering from six inches thick amidships to two inches at the bow and stern, and ten feet six deep, encircles her, besides the protective deck, bulkheads, and barbettes. Her battery is splendidly protected, all her guns being in casemates—with the exception of 7.5 guns on the forecastle and poop, which are covered by a steel hood. Her armament consists of four 7.5 guns—three with straight-ahead fire—and six six-inch, with twenty-nine light guns for resisting torpedo-boat attacks. She is expected to steam twenty-two knots and a quarter.

This splendid fighting machine makes a contrast to the old cruiser *Northampton*, unbending sails and now striking top-masts for the last time. In 1876 the *Northampton* was built as an auxiliary armoured cruiser. She was bark-rigged, with a tremendous spread of canvas. The armament consisted of four ten-inch and eight nine-inch ; the eight nine-inch on the broadside had no armour protection at all. Her speed was only twelve knots. This ship has for some years been doing useful service as a seagoing training-ship for boys ; but the great Admiral who is known to his many admirers as "Jacky Fisher" has decreed that the masts and yards and obsolete guns are to be no longer a part of the man-o'-war's men's training, and a fine protected cruiser, the *Endymion*, has been substituted for the *Northampton*, which is to be sold out of the Service.

Another sign of change is to be found in the small ships of P class now paying off in this same basin

## London to the Nore

together with the *Speedy*. Though up-to-date in their way, these ships would only be a danger in war. They could neither fight nor run away. They absorb valuable trained men, who would be more usefully employed in ships capable of taking their place in the line of battle.

The *Vindictive* and the *Hyacinth* are undergoing an extensive refit.

In No. 2 Basin the first vessel that catches the eye is the *Northumberland* (or *Northo*, as the bluejackets call her), now ending her days as a training-ship for stokers. Built in 1868 as a very long armoured frigate with five masts, the *Northo* originally mounted seven twelve-ton muzzle-loading rifle guns and twenty of nine tons. She steamed fourteen knots, but under canvas was not a great success. It is reported that on one occasion, after missing stays fourteen times, she finally declined to wear: so at last her superfluous masts were lifted out, and she was rigged as a bark, and looked very well when all ataunto.

Immediately ahead of the *Northo* lies the old *Pembroke*, once the *Duncan*, a fine two-decked wooden line-of-battle ship of one hundred and three guns, a fast sailer, and a good fighting ship of her time. Ahead of her lies the *Hecla*, a floating workshop and torpedo-repair ship, bought in '78 from the Cunard Company. On the other side of the basin are two interesting ships, the *Alexandra* and the *Superb*, with central batteries, launched in 1875. The *Superb* was being built for the Turks at Blackwall, but was bought by the British

## Chatham Fleet

Government during one of the frequent war-scares in the days when we had few battleships and there was no Navy League to teach the country the importance of sea-power. In 1882 these ships took part in the bombardment of Alexandria. Some years ago fighting-tops were substituted for the old bark-rig carried by these vessels, and they were partly rearmed ; but it is improbable that either will ever hoist the pennant again. Their main batteries are composed of muzzle-loading guns—except in the case of the *Alexandra*, which mounts two 9.2's. The *Superb* mounts ten 6.2's on the upper-deck ; but, as the guns have no protection, she would be a slaughter-house in action.

The *Tribune*, second-class protected cruiser, is about to pay off after a commission in the West Indies. She is being rapidly stripped, and presents an appearance different from that of the smart vessel that moored in Blackstakes a few days ago. In No. 3 Basin are berthed all the reserve ships—those of the *Royal Sovereign* class, a *Duncan*, and two of the *Sutlej* class. The *Royal Sovereigns* have all recently undergone partial reconstruction. The upper-deck six-inch guns have been placed in casemates, instead of the old shields ; which increases the weight of the ships by a hundred tons, but renders them much more efficient fighting ships. Besides these are the *Duncan*, 1898, first-class battleship, the two first-class protected cruisers *Diadem* and *Argonaut*, *Endymion*, the second-class cruiser *Scylla*, the third-class cruisers *Pegasus* and *Brisk*, and four destroyers, all of them forty-



## London to the Nore

eight-hour ships—that is to say, they are supposed to be able to put to sea fully equipped at two days' warning. Then, there are the old cruisers *Warspite*, *Australia*, *Arethusa*, *Mersey*, *Severn*, *Gleaner*, *Pigmy*, and *Renard*, which are to be sold out of the Service as no longer fit for warfare.

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## CHAPTER XVII

GEOLOGY—FAMOUS MEN  
—UPNOR

**A**R beyond Chatham the great ridge of Blue-bell Hill continues the range of the North Downs. Between it and the opposite ridge the Medway has in the course of ages cut itself a

channel. Here and there we catch a glimpse of the river winding towards us from the Weald of Kent. We study not only the view, but also the geology of Thames and Medway, beginning with the salt marsh that at the moment is being deposited before our very eyes. In the old days, when there were no embankments, large tracts of land were submerged with each spring-tide. Everything that is marked on the map as alluvium resembles salt marsh. Pimlico, Westminster, Lambeth, Rotherhithe, the Isle of Dogs, and Silvertown are built on reclaimed land; and farther down the river

## London to the Nore

this belt continually widens. Going back through the long vista of time, we come to the gravels of the glacial period, which were left in hollows and basins on the surface of the land. In these are found the flints chipped by our prehistoric ancestors, reindeer and mammoth bones, with leaves of dwarf birch, and a willow preserved in the seams of clay—reminiscent of a bleak period, when the hippopotamus, the rhinoceros, the lion, and the bear, with deer and oxen, roamed the frozen country. Then comes a tremendous break in time, during which we have to stretch across the Miocene—the long period when the coral grew in the warm shallow sea over Suffolk, leaving scanty traces in hollows of the North Downs. The next deposit we can trace is under our very feet—the stiff reddish-brown London clay, which has been slowly deposited, layer by layer, at the bottom of a warm ocean; it stretches away all over the ridges of the Hundred of Hoo, the Isle of Grain, Sheppey, and on to distant Whitstable and Herne Bay. Some great river seems to have brought down the fruits and leaves of all sorts of plants, which sank to the bottom among the crabs and lobsters, the cypresses, sequoia, pines, and yews. American aloes, smilax, bananas, ginger, and screw-pines, such as now grow on the banks of the Ganges, seem to have been very common. Besides these were nutmegs and fan-palms, the oak, hazel, walnut, magnolia, with such medicinal plants as strychnos, which yields nux vomica, and cinchona, out of which quinine is made; also almonds, plums, cocoa, limes,

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CRUISERS AND COAL-HULKS OFF PORT VICTORIA



Small boat and cutter



## Geology

the lotus, and the great Victoria lily, which now grows in Tropical America. Wonderful birds with teeth flew about ; and there were strange creatures in these tertiary times—three-toed horses and the dinotherium (a sort of mastodon whose tusks grew down out of its jaw).

All the higher parts of London are built upon this old sea-bottom, which spreads over Essex and a part of the north of Kent and Surrey. Underneath, and therefore older, are the sandy beds which crop out all about the banks of the Thames at Woolwich, Erith, Swanscombe, Tilbury, and Higham. Here at Upnor is a pale yellow cliff of sand which must have been laid down on the bottom of a fresh-water lake. Rounded pebbles and beds of clay alternate with layers of shells, some of which seem to have grown on the branches of trees ; but now and then the sea must have broken in, for in some of the beds sharks' teeth and bones of crocodiles and fresh-water tortoises are mixed up with the rounded pebbles of flint which have been washed out of the chalk. If you move along to Tower Hill, you will find on the south of it another cliff, the top of which is sand and the lower part chalk. This is not a shallow-water deposit. It must have been laid down on the floor of some great ocean. In fact, at the present moment an organic sediment is slowly accumulating at the bottom of the Atlantic, almost exactly chalk in its composition. The substance of chalk when seen through a microscope is nothing but millions and millions of little shells called *foraminifera*. With these are larger fossils, star-fish, sea-urchins, shepherd's



## London to the Nore

crowns, and sea-lilies, sharks' teeth, tiny sponges, and coral, remains of old drift-wood which floated on the surface of the primeval ocean until, bored through and water-logged by the teredo worm, it sank to the bottom among the ammonites and the cuttle-fish.

The chalk, which is covered over by the newer sands and clays of the London basin, crops out at several points along the Thames—Erith, Purfleet, Greenhithe, Grays Thurrock, Northfleet, and Cliffe,—and wherever it appears near the water there will be found the tall chimneys and jetties and tramways of the cement-works; but the biggest quarries of all are on the Medway, where men are rapidly changing the surface of the country, boring great gaps and tunnels into the Downs, carving away hills, and covering the neighbourhood with an impalpable white powder. Through the smoke of hundreds of tall chimneys rises the Norman keep of Rochester, a tower of strength that stands “four-square to all the winds that blow”; alongside are the spire and pinnacles of the old Cathedral. West-south-west rise the round downs of Cobham Park. Nearer is the ridge of Frindsbury, crowned by the tall-spired, red-roofed church of All Saints, which not long ago stood on a short spur of the chalk; but such enormous quantities have been excavated that it now stands close to a deep chalk-pit that extends eastward. Very few people pass this point without stopping to gaze at the beautiful view across to Rochester. Down a steep incline is Strood. The river, spanned by the bridge, winds away through the

## Upnor

distant hills. Towards us, and just below Frindsbury, is Tower Hill, with ever-changing outline, which the sappers carve and tunnel, trench and dig, into new shapes from year to year. Here are rifle-pits, wire entanglements, abattis, Boer trenches, half-hour trenches, fascines, crows'-feet, hasty demolitions, and the wreck of a house, pierced with loop-holes, barricaded and piled up with sand-bags. It is well to keep to the footpath when crossing this hill at night. One can never be sure what new plaything of *horrida bella* may have sprung up during the day. To the west are the hamlets, Lower and Upper Upnor; between them is the Elizabethan castle, with great stores of shot and shell, cordite, lydite, and gun-cotton. Small-gauge trams and railways lead in all directions from the black jetties, where the barges with danger-flags flying are being loaded, up to the great magazines of Lodge Hill and Chattenden, on to the South-Eastern Railway at Sharnal Street, and even to the tip of the pontoon Hard, where the Engineers are busy building a floating bridge.

All the new buildings and sheds have taken away a great deal of the old-world beauty of Upnor, which twenty years ago nestled among tall elms and emerald turf, surrounded by weathered red-brick cottages and Yeoman houses. All this has been shut out by a great Government wall, jealously guarded by the metropolitan police, instead of the sentry who walked up and down a raised bank of grass with a loaded rifle and called the passing hours of the night with a cheerful "All's well." It was at Upnor that Sir Francis

## London to the Nore

Drake lived during his boyhood. His father, being driven from home, near South Tavistock, by religious persecution in the time of Henry the Eighth, came into Kent, and, according to Camden, had to inhabit the hull of a ship, in which many of his twelve sons were born. In Edward the Sixth's time he got his livelihood by reading prayers to the seamen. Later he was ordained a deacon and made vicar of the church of Upnor. Poverty obliged him to put out his son Francis to a master of a trading bark, and the boy showed so much industry that the captain, when he died, left him the ship. Drake continued to trade; by this means he got a little money together. Hearing of Sir John Hawkins' projected expedition to America, and having in 1565 and 1566 received damage from the Spaniards at Rio de Hocha with Captain John Lovel, he sold his bark and left Kent with other stout seamen to join the adventurers.

While Drake was living and working in his bark at Upnor, another person destined to be great was born at the village of Gillingham in 1568. That was William Adams, who, when old enough, was apprenticed, as Drake had been, to the master of a hoy trading between Wapping and Gillingham. Later he took to piloting vessels in the Medway and the Thames; then he joined the Navy as pilot and harbour-master. By and by he took service with the Worshipful Company of Barbary Merchants, with whom he remained eleven years; after which he joined the Worshipful Fellowship of London Merchants, and was chief pilot

## Famous Men

on board the admiral's ship of the Texel fleet, fitting out for Japan in June 1598. Four other ships apparently accompanied this expedition—the *Good News*, the *Faith*, the *Fidelity*, the *Hope*, besides his own ship the *Charity*. They called at Cape de Verd Islands, and were driven by a storm on the Guinea coast, reaching the Straits of Magellan in April 1599. In a storm on the south Chilian coast the ships separated. The *Charity*, with Adams, reached port safely. The *Faith* and the *Fidelity* abandoned the expedition, and the *Good News* was captured by the Spaniards. Sailing north, the *Charity* found the *Hope* at Santa Maria, where Thomas Adams, brother of William, was killed by natives while in charge of a landing party near Valdivia. In November both ships, though short-handed, set sail for Japan. In a storm the *Hope* was lost; and it was after much suffering that the *Charity* reached Kiū Sin, in Japan, in April 1600, having been two years on the voyage, and having on board only Captain Quackernock, Adams, and twenty men. The ship was taken to Sakai and stripped. Fifty thousand dollars were appropriated by the Japanese to maintain the crew. Adams, by his address and ability, and in spite of Jesuit opposition, made himself a great favourite with the Emperor, and taught the Court English, mathematics, navigation, and shipbuilding. He was gradually promoted to the highest rank, marrying a Japanese lady and having a retinue of ninety servants. He built two ships in 1602, with the help of Quackernock, at Yedo, on the English model. Hearing, in

## London to the Nore

1609, of the Dutch expedition to Japan, he sent a letter by the commander to Java, where the English merchants were in 1611, begging assistance, and enclosing a letter for his wife in England. The East India Company fitted out an expedition in 1611 under Captain Sans, which reached Japan in 1613, and met Adams at Firando. Richard Cookes and eight seamen stayed with Adams, and the East India Company appointed him their commissioner in Japan. Trade made considerable progress at his instance ; but he never contrived to get away, though eventually the Emperor gave him permission to visit England. Adams died in 1619, and was buried in great state close to the dockyard of "Yokosuko" ; and his Japanese wife died some years later. In those days the Spanish and the Portuguese had lost their trade with Japan by their arrogance and extravagance. Englishmen were welcome through the memory of Adams. The ports were closed from 1636-73, the Japanese having had bitter experience of foreign Christians.

Here are a few excerpts from W. Adams' own letters in *Penchas his Pilgrim* (Hakluyt Soc., vol. ii.) :—

"Your worships will understand that I am a Kentish man, born in a town called Gillingham, two English miles from Rochester and one mile from Chatham, where the King's ships do lie."

"I have served in the place of master and pilot in Her Majesty's ships, and about eleven or twelve years served the Worshipful Company of the Barbary Merchants until the Indian traffic. I was desirous to make

## Famous Men

a little experience of the small knowledge God has given me. So in the year of our Lord God 1598 I hired myself for chief pilot to a fleet of five sail of Hollanders."

"The people of the Island of Japan are good of nature, courteous above measure, and valiant in war. I think no land better governed by civil policy."

On October 10, 1666, Pepys makes this entry in his *Diary*: "They say the King hath had towards this war expressly thus much:—

Royal ayde . . . . .	£2,450,000
More . . . . .	1,250,000
Three months' tax given the King by a power of raising a month's tax of £70,000, every year of three years' customs .	0,210,000
Out of which the King did promise to pay £240,000, which for two years come to . . .	0,480,000
Prizes which they moderately reckon at . . . . .	0,300,000
A debt declared by the Navy by us . . . . .	0,900,000
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	£5,590,000
The whole charge of the Navy as we state it, for two years and a month, hath been but .	3,200,000
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So what has become of all this sum . . . . .	£2,390,000 "

## London to the Nore

"On June the 10th, 1667, comes the news that the Dutch are come up as high as the Nore," and this when everything was in a fearful state of unpreparedness. Charles had spent the money voted for the Navy, and for the sake of economy the fleet had not been fitted out. The Dutchmen burnt the half-burnt block-house at Sheerness and plundered the magazine of stores, which was as bravely defended by Sir Edward Spragge as a place unfinished could possibly be.

The Duke of Albemarle hastened down with land forces, sank some vessels in the entrance of the Medway, and laid a strong chain across it. The Dutch writers allow that they would not have had the courage to attempt breaking the chain had not a certain Captain Brackel, who was in disgrace and confinement for some misdemeanour, solicited and obtained his liberty on condition of making this effort. His success was equal to the boldness of his enterprise. On the 11th they broke their way through, and burnt three ships—the *Matthias*, the *Unity*, and the *Charles*. Favoured by wind and tide, they advanced on the 13th, with six men-o'-war and five fireships, as far as Upnor Castle; but were so warmly received by Major Scot from the castle and Sir Edward Spragge from the opposite shore that they suffered no small damage to their ships, and lost a great many men. As they retired they burnt the *Royal Oak*, and damaged the *Loyal London* and the *Great James*. They sailed down the river on the 14th carrying with them the hull of the *Royal Charles*. In this action one Captain Douglas, who was to defend the

## Famous Men

*Royal Oak*, receiving no orders, would not leave his ship, saying that "it should never be told that a Douglas quitted his post without orders." He resolutely remained on board, and was burnt with the ship.

"The very night the Dutch burned our ships the King did sup with my Lady Castlemaine at the Duchess of Monmouth's, and they were all mad in the hunting of a poor moth." In the evening Captains Hart and Hayward went to see Pepys about six merchant-ships that had been taken up for men-o'-war. In talking, they told him about the taking of the *Royal Charles*—"That nothing but carelessness lost the ship, for they might have saved her the very tide that the Dutch came up, if they would have but used means and had had but boats, and that want of boats plainly lost all the other ships. That the Dutch did take her with a boat of nine men, who found not a man on board her, and presently a man went up and struck her flag and jack, and a trumpeter sounded upon her 'Joan's placket is torn'; that they did carry her down at a time, both for tides and wind, when the best pilot in Chatham would not have undertaken it, they heeling her on one side to make her draw little water; and so carried her away."

It is not generally known that the celebrated marine painter William Vandewelde the younger was present in his own yacht during this engagement. The fine sketches which he made on that occasion are now in the British Museum.

Two days after the Dutch left the *Hope*, Pepys



## London to the Nore

watches the boats come up from Chatham and the rowers with their bandoleers about their shoulders and muskets in their boats—these were workmen of the yard who had promised to redeem their credit, lost by their deserting the Service. He also goes to see the batteries, “which indeed are very fine, and guns placed so as one would think the river should be very secure. Then by barge, it raining hard down, to the chain. And there saw it fast at the end on Upnor side of the river ; very fast and borne up upon the several stages across the river, and where it is broke nobody can tell me. I went on shore on Upnor side to look upon the end of the chain, and caused the link to be measured, and it was six inches and one-fourth in circumference.

“It seems very remarkable to me, and of great honour to the Dutch, that those of them that did go on shore to Gillingham, though they went in fear of their lives and were some of them killed, and notwithstanding their provocation at Scelling, yet killed none of our people nor plundered their houses, but did take some things of easy carriage and left the rest, and not a house burned ; and which is to our eternal disgrace that what my Lord Douglas's men who came after them found there, they plundered and took all away, and the waterman that carried us did further tell us that our own soldiers are far more terrible to those people of the country towns than the Dutch themselves.”

Commissioner P. Pett, who lived in the present Admiralty House, was a celebrated builder of ships, and was sent to the Tower for not having used more

## Famous Men

diligence in endeavouring to save those which were lying in the Medway from being burnt or carried off by the Dutch. When brought before the Council and accused of having used the Admiralty boats to save his own property, he said he never used a boat until all but one of the boats had gone, and that was to carry away things of great value—his models of ships. Some of the Council wished that the Dutch had had them instead of the King's ships. Pett did believe the Dutch would have made more advantage of the models than of the ships, and that the King had had greater loss thereby. At this they all laughed.

To realise all these scenes, it must be remembered that the site of the present docks and extension works was an archipelago of muddy islands and winding creeks. Where the line of basins now extend was a deep creek, and many of the ships destroyed by the Dutch were moored there. In making the collier dock at the south entrance, the convicts unearthed the hull of the *Matthias*, originally a Dutch ship, captured by us. There were many guns of the period marked with the rose and thistle, and some Dutch guns, which were afterwards presented to the Museum of the Hague. Besides these there were surgical instruments, of which we have a record in a claim made by the doctor on the Admiralty for their value.

Opposite our boat-house in the woods is moored the *Melampus*, gun-cotton ship, which some few years ago took the place of the old *Leonidas*, and might have been the innocent cause of even a worse scourge to the

## London to the Nore

ships and dockyard than the redoubtable Dutchmen. It was the day after all England had been electrified by the attempt of a poor wretch to blow up Greenwich Observatory. The Master had intended going for a sail early in the afternoon, but had become so interested in his work that he put it off until dusk, and was giving up the idea of going at all; but I persuaded him that he needed a blow, if only for an hour or so. He had not been gone more than three-quarters of an hour when I heard him calling as he ran up towards the nursery: "Quick! quick! Get the babies, and take them downstairs. The *Leonidas* is on fire, and may blow up any minute." The babies were having their bath; but we did not wait long to roll them into anything that came handy, and flew downstairs with the feeling one has when expecting the next big flash of lightning. Luckily, the Master had been in time. He had averted catastrophe. He had launched the boat and set sail, just making way against the tide, taking short tacks close into the mud, when, looking back towards the powder-ship, he noticed sparks and little lumps of flame which seemed to drop from the fiddle-head into the water. He put his helm up and ran back to her. As he came closer, he saw that flames and particles of wood or tinder were falling in a little shower. He shouted with all his might, "*Leonidas*, ahoy!" which attracted the attention of the men on a barge anchored close to her. Our own boatmen, and the men on a black-sailed barge that came drifting by, joined in the clamour. As the caretaker came on deck,

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H.M.S. "MELAMPUS," GUN-COTTON HULK





## H.M.S. "Leonidas"

yawning, he said, "Hallo! What's up?" "Why, you're all afire forrud," said the bargee; which made the man tumble into his dinghy and row round to her bow. "Got any powder on board?" shouted the man from the anchored craft.—"Yas—gun-cotton too." "Well, I'm going out of it!" There was a tremendous clicking of pawls as the two bargees hove their anchor up and set sail in the shortest time on record. The fire was put out by buckets of water thrown into the fiddle-head. Next day the hulk was taken charge of by the police, and all the powder and gun-cotton unloaded and taken away. How the fire originated was never discovered. Whoever was guilty evidently knew in what part of the ship the gunpowder was stored, for the fire was placed from the outside under the spot.



*Ammonites from the Gault*



## CHAPTER XVIII

### SHEERNESS, MINSTER, AND STANGATE CREEK



**T**he *Four Brothers* is up at Gill, the barge-builder's, to be garbed respectably in a new coat of paint, and was promised down for last evening ; but here we are—twelve o'clock—and as yet there is no sign of her. We have all been working hard, and how many times we have tramped up and down the hill it would be difficult to say. At any rate, her gear is piled high in the cottage-garden—blankets, quilts, mattresses, plate, crockery, glass, rugs, and cushions. As usual, we are a large party, and have accepted the kind invitation of the Admiral at the Nore to a ball this evening at Sheerness. It begins to look as if we shall never get there. I can quite enter into the feelings of Sister Anne as once again I mount to what is known in the house as the “top-gallant studio,” and with the glass scan the river up Chatham Reach to the bridge.

## Sheerness

Hurrah ! I can see her just passing the dockyard sheds. Very well she looks, with her brilliant newly dressed sails, her hull the colour of a hedge-sparrow's egg, and her gold stripe and scroll glittering in the sunlight. We are all eager to get on board. Music, banjos, and flowers make the last load from the house. On the beach Captain Smart and Major Stowell are waiting. All are in excellent humour. The tide has ebbed a good deal ; the wind is very faint, and it is a toss-up if we shall get as far as Sheerness to-night. To our surprise, we see the Master, who was in London, at the helm. As he comes within hailing distance, he calls out : " It is lucky for you girls I had to cross Rochester Bridge and saw the barge still at her mooring. She would not have been down this tide had I not gone and cut her out." The moment she swings to her anchor we all form up in a line. The men take off the saloon skylight, one standing in the saloon, another on deck ; the maids are along the alley-way to the cabins. Major Stowell and Captain Smart, with Joy and Aileen, " two of the best girls we know," and my sister Norah and the boys, start from the huge pile in the garden, handing the gear from one to the other, so that in a wonderfully short time all is on board.

We set sail, up anchor, and start down the river. The deck is left to the Master and one hand ; the mate, the crew, the Major, and the Captain struggle with carpets and writhing spring mattresses. It is splendid ! Should ever I have such another experience, give me a Major of Marines and a Captain in the Royal Engineers,

## London to the Nore

with girls willing and able to help. Then the thing is done. Coming into the saloon, I see a maid busily stowing all the glass, which has a tendency to come about every time the barge tacks. The wind is right ahead, and as our bow pays round the flapping of the sails and rattle of the fore-sail sliding backwards and forwards on the horse make it difficult to hear oneself speak. Who is so busy under the table with a brush and dust-pan? All I can see are the soles of two boots and a bump in the tablecloth. A very hot face emerges from the opposite side. The Major's! "I have nearly finished. I thought Alice had better put the glass away before it gets broken. I have brushed the cushions, and have nearly done here." Before I can say anything he is sweeping away as hard as ever.

My cook is a jewel, and has got quite used to a large family and emergencies; but, unfortunately, *mal de mer* prevents her joining our cruising parties. She does her very best ashore for us, and as soon as she gets word that the barge is in sight a hamper of good things is prepared. Thus, when the steward comes aft with a long face, and says, "Please, ma'am, what am I to do? The galley fire won't draw, and they keep taking my chimney off on deck, because of the fore-sail," I answer, "Look in the baskets. Cook is sure to have sent something"; and so it proves. Dinner is cold, but good.

The tide is very nearly done, and the dusk is falling as we bring up at Sheerness.

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YACHTS AFTER A RACE





## Sheerness

various cabins, dressing ; and, having a headache, I am taking a short spell of sleep, when through the partition comes Joy's voice : " I say, Mistress Wyllie, may we have some candles ? " I put away the groceries ; but where are the candles ? I call Bob, who is my stand-by when I want any help. He is not going to the dance. " Do go, dear, and see if you can find any candles or lights of any sort. " After what seems a long time, he comes back with a tiny end of dip stuck on to the usual workman's candlestick, a piece of flat wood and three nails, that he had found in the forecastle. Then he goes along the cabins. " I say, girls : you must go to mother's cabin to be finished ; and be quick, or the candle won't last. " We only just manage with our dip, hooking and lacing, one behind another, as fast as we can go.

" Eight precious souls, and all agog to dash through thick and thin, " pushed off in the big boat to the camber. Knowing that it will be a tedious business hailing a sleepy crew far off, we decide to tie the boat alongside a steam-launch and hide the oars.

Arrived at Admiralty House, we have a warm welcome. The Maltese band is playing a waltz ; there are plenty of partners and a good floor ; inside the air is warm, and the garden is illuminated by thousands of fairy lamps.

We all decide it has been a most delightful ball as we hobble along to the boat in the silent but broad daylight. Nothing disturbs us much until ten o'clock,



## London to the Nore

when our ship's company drift one by one into the saloon for breakfast. Afterwards, rugs, cushions, and books are brought on to the deck, as it is no use starting until the tide begins to make. A brisk easterly wind is causing a big jump of a sea ; the colour of the world is brilliant and hard. Garrison Fort is the point at which the Medway falls into the Thames. Admiralty House, originally built for Sailor Billy, afterwards William the Fourth, is so close that when the great guns are fired everything hanging on the walls has to be taken down, the window-sashes have to be removed, and a great cloth is hung outside. When the Dutch burnt the partly-built block-house and stores, Charles the Second's Government were obliged to recognise the importance of erecting defensive works. The dockyard and fortifications were begun, and the town of Sheerness, which is in the parish of Minster, grew in consequence.

It is not at all a bad little place, though it would be healthier if the brackish moat that surrounds the fortifications, and is a cause of ague, could be done away with. The dockyard is small in comparison with that of Chatham or that of Portsmouth ; but it covers some sixty acres. There are two small basins, and a larger one able to accommodate a second-class cruiser. A little way from the dockyard is a big columbarium, striped red and yellow, so that the hundreds of pigeons bred and trained as carriers may know their own home.

Once before, when we were lying here, and wanted a walk, we went to Minster, where is a fine old church dedicated to Saints Mary and Sexburga. Sexburga

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SHEERNESS





## Minster

Abbess of Minster, succeeded St Ethelreda at Ely, leaving Minster to her daughter Eormenhilda. On Sexburga's death Eormenhilda succeeded at Ely, leaving Minster to her daughter Wereburge. This Monastery was founded in 673. The Danes destroyed it, and it was not until 1130 that Archbishop Corboil restored it as a home for Benedictine nuns. All that remains now is the church and gate-house. The tomb of Sir Robert de Shurland is very fine, and above is the head of his horse Grey Dolphin, swimming with his nostrils almost touching the waves. The knight is in a complete suit of chain-mail of the thirteenth century. His hands are clasped in prayer, and his legs crossed. An Ingoldsby legend says that he swam out on Grey Dolphin in pursuit of Edward Longshanks, who had nearly reached the Nore, to obtain the Royal pardon, and with this secure in his vest, he boldly turned again, and, on reaching the shore, was loosening the girths of his demi-pique, to give the panting animal breath, when he was aware of an ugly old woman peeping at him from under the horse's belly. She told him to make much of his steed. "He has saved your life, Robert Shurland, for the nonce ; but he shall yet be the means of your losing it for all that !" The Baron dropped the rein and drew forth his great sword "Tickletoby," and as Dolphin, good, easy horse, stretched out his neck to the herbage, he cut it off at a single blow. Three years after, on returning from the French and Scotch wars, he landed on his native shore. "It was then, upon that very beach, some hundred

## London to the Nore

yards distant from high-water mark," that his eyes again fell on the ugly old woman. The Baron started. He rushed towards the spot ; but the form was gone. There lay the whitened skull of a dead horse. The hag's prediction rose to his mind in an instant. To show contempt of his weakness, he spurned the relic with his foot which soon after began to hurt ; and when he took off his boot a horse's tooth was sticking in his great toe. Gangrene set in, and of this wound he died. Subsequently to the appearance of this narrative, the tomb had been opened during the course of repairs which the church had undergone, and the body inside had one of the great toes wanting. This is according to Ingoldsby.

Sheerness is boastful of its whale-boats, which are quite a build apart. They are rigged with a sprit-sail and steer with an oar over the lee-quarter. The watermen declare that they can get off to the ship when the men-o'-war boats are unable to do so, which is fairly often, as a west wind against a flood-tide knocks up a terrible and dangerous sea. At Queenborough, bawleys and smacks come from many places to fish for whitebait along the banks of the Swale. If you get up early in the morning you may see the men rowing round the edges of the flats, and, after the net is shot, striking the water with their oars to chase the fish to their doom. The whitebait is of no use unless caught in time for the early train. Thus, when ordinary folks think of rising, the nets are all fluttering dry at the mast-heads. The Swale runs right round to Whitstable, with two branching creeks, one to Sitting

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MOUTH OF THE MEDWAY



1. The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as  $t \rightarrow \infty$ . It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are bounded and tend to zero as  $t \rightarrow \infty$  if the matrix  $A$  is stable. The second part of the paper is devoted to the study of the asymptotic behavior of the solutions of the system (1) as  $t \rightarrow \infty$  if the matrix  $A$  is not stable. It is shown that the solutions of the system (1) are unbounded and tend to infinity as  $t \rightarrow \infty$  if the matrix  $A$  is not stable.

19.  $\frac{1}{2} \ln \frac{1}{2} = -\frac{1}{2} \ln 2$

## Minster

bourne and the other to Faversham ; and it is a very jolly sail at high water, when you can see right over the green marshes. The mast of the boat must lower to pass under the bridge at King's Ferry.

Queenborough, so called in honour of Philippa of Hainault, is a town of the past. It once had a castle, built by William of Wickham at command of Edward the Third, which was largely repaired by Henry the Eighth in 1537 ; but now the school occupies the site, and Queenborough is known far and wide for its great pier and station, from which start the double-funnelled paddle-boats which run to Flushing. Every night, just before they start, their lamps throw up into the sky a radiance that can be seen miles away. Every echo is awakened by the hoot of their great sonorous sirens to clear the way through the narrow water. At the mouth of the creek is a large notice-board warning vessels not to anchor westward of this buoy, as in turning the great bulk of the ship practically takes up the width of the creek.

Outside us lie several men-o'-war signalling rapidly all the time to the tall Marconi flag-staff on Garrison Point Fort. How fast they talk, and how much they have to say to one another ! The bawleys are all clustered in against the pier. The tide is evidently slackening. A barge with brilliant sails is running in under her fore-sail and top-sail. A boat has just pushed off from the camber, and is making for us,—crowded with visitors. It is with pleasure, as she comes alongside, that we greet the gallant V.C. who attended to the wounded at Colenso under a heavy fire, and afterwards

## London to the Nore

went to the rescue of an officer who was lying in agony on the veldt. He has come to inquire how we all are after the dance. He himself did his duty nobly the whole night, though suffering, as he quaintly put it, "from old feet in new boots."

The boys have just come on board, saying that up Stangate Creek at low tide Roman pottery can be found. They have brought with them a few samples, which are evidently genuine. They say that on the highest point of the salting three coffins are being uncovered by the slipping away of the mud-cliff. A mud-lark, then, is evidently the order of the day, especially as the tide is so low that we shall be able to have an hour or two before it is time to start for home.

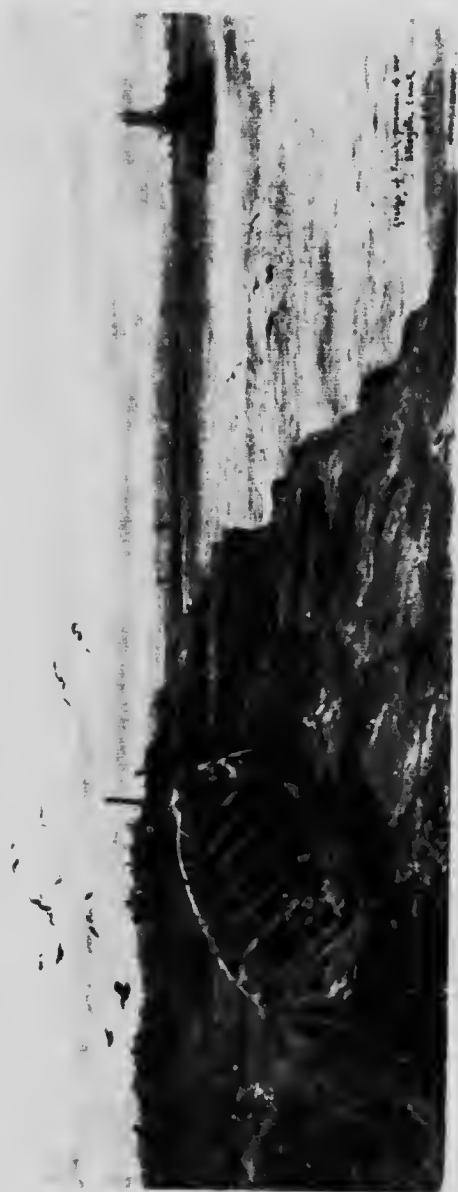
Stangate is the second-largest creek up the Medway after Queenborough Swale. Its entrance is in a line with the boom that crosses the river to prevent a hostile fleet from sailing up to Chatham. In the creek lie the out-of-date ships of the Navy, waiting to be sold out, and Admiralty lighters full of coal, and, on the banks, sections of the pontoons that support the boom between the vessels. The sun's heat has opened some of the top seams of our small sailing boat, and the water comes in almost as quickly as we bail it out, which makes it necessary to take off shoes and stockings even before reaching the mud. Having moored the boat off with plenty of line, the Master carries the small anchor ashore, his feet sinking deep into the river-bed at every step. I hate mud ; but the boys revel in it, and awake the echoes with their shouts as they slip and slide in the shiny ooze.

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GRAVES OF FRENCH PRISONERS OF WAR, STANGATE CREEK







## Stangate Creek

It is a dreary spot, with the sky reflected on the water, which, ebbing, lays bare a long strip of mud on either side. A small cliff of mud emerges. We scramble up, crushing a sweet pungent smell from a little close-growing herb that covers the top of the salting in tufts interspersed with sea-lavenders and pinks. The creek winds away as far as Lower Halstow. Soon we come to the spot about which the boys have been talking.

A boisterous night and a high spring-tide must have begun this hole in the salt marsh ; subsequent high tides continued the work of excavation that has laid bare the coffins of these poor folk. The line on either side where the grave was dug can be traced in the bank. Lidless coffins, broken and unsightly, out of which the poor bones have been washed, jut out of the bank. In the middle of the depression lies a mouldering whale-boat, dropping to pieces and covered in green weed. High above, the sea-birds circle round and round, the pewit adding to the dreariness its mournful cry. The ooze is alive with sound, as if the mud-worms and clams were smacking their lips. Small bubbles rise and burst. The living millions combine to make a hum in which it is impossible to separate any particular note. The sound accentuates the loneliness. On a stormy night the ghosts should rise, man the whale-boat, and return to beautiful France. Doubtless the poor fellows died on the hulks that during the wars of a hundred years ago were here moored as prison-ships.

In this muddy cliff is a record of every tide since

## London to the Nore

the dawn of English history. Lowest of all is a layer of brushwood which seems to have been laid down in the ooze and thickly covered with oyster-shells. What a number of these shell-fish the old Kentish men must have eaten! Perhaps they went on eating them year after year for a very long time? By and by, it would seem, the silt of the river covered up the shells. After a century or two the Romans came upon the scene, throwing down upon the silt much broken pottery, bricks, and the tiles with which they built the flues and hot chambers in their villas—all sorts of crockery, some of it cracked and mended with lead rivets. I wonder why they threw all this out on the salt marsh? Perhaps to make a path to some old landing-place. Here, too, they seem to have buried the ashes of their dead. Some perfect urns are now and then found by the mud-men when they dig the clay. Some of the vases are signed by the potter with his name.

All through the Saxon and the Norman times the Medway, ebbing and flowing, slowly built up the salting, bu-ying all that lay upon the surface. Although the water is perpetually raising the level of the marsh, the waves washing against the upright cliffs lay bare bit by bit all that is buried. Thus we may read the story of the ages as written by the Medway.

When we get back to the boat the bottom boards are afloat, and there has to be much bailing before we can push off.

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## Stangate Creek

bone, so blackened and covered with barnacles that they have to be left behind.

As soon as we reach the barge we "hale" up, as the old history says, and wend our way homewards. There is a lovely sunset. It is as if God had the great cloud in His grip, and were making it resemble an hour-glass shedding rays of light, instead of sand, upon the earth. Behind the grip sinks the sun, outlining the dark cloud and the little pinnacled masses with a halo of intense brightness. High above, the blue is dappled with feathery grey clouds, each glowing on the side towards the sun, the whole rising in the heavens like the soft underwing of some great bird. Trees and the rising land are turning a misty blue, and the spire of the old church cuts clear against the sky. Home stands on the highest point of land among the trees. The river reflects the colour of the sky in the dark wavelets. The wind that comes warm and fragrant from the land is dying with the day.

It is just the top of high water, and if we cannot get more speed on the barge we shall not be home to-night. The Skipper hails for volunteers to man the sweeps. Harold and Grey take one; Skipper and Hand take the other. Slowly we creep between the forts of Hoo and Darnet, built, in support of Palmerston's spirited policy, of granite, and armed with muzzle-loading guns. The stones are painted in red and white chequers to distract attention from the real gun ports, which grin from plates of armour. At the tip of Folly Point stands the most long-suffering beacon



## London to the Nore

on the two rivers. It is an old gun buried to the trunnions, with a thick iron rod stepped in its muzzle, surmounted by a triangle of chequers and a ball. As at high tide a barge can take her choice, and go inside or outside, the poor thing gets many a knock. Now and then on a dark night some craft drives right over it, leaving poor Folly Beacon a woeful object with its bent head touching the mud.

All along by Gillingham and the dockyard thousands of lights are twinkling.

Now we are round Hoo Ness, and skirting the shade thrown by the dark band of trees that grows to the water's edge at Cockham. After five more minutes of creeping we are up to our own boat-house in the deep shadow of the wood. The chain rattles over the drum; the anchor goes in with a splash; and the barge swings head to tide.





## CHAPTER XIX

### COCKHAM WOOD REACH TO ALLINGTON

**B**REAKING our anchor out of the ground early this morning, we slip up-stream before a gentle north-east wind. As we turn the corner where the little poplar trees have been planted on what was once salt marsh, the long vista of Chatham Reach opens before us. On the left, just beyond the North Lock, steam cranes are busy lifting frames and angle-iron from the holds of the north-country tramp steamers. Farther on the tremendous carcass of a battleship is slowly growing into shape on the new slip. The clang of hammers is deafening. The riveters, clustered like ants about the tall sides, strike

## London to the Nore

in rhythmic chorus at the glowing steel. A slip with a cradle on wheels for pulling up torpedo boats and launches comes next, and alongside the sluice-gate that leads into the timber-pond. Off in the stream is a timber-ship, from the low ports in the bow of which men are hauling, with the aid of a tackle at the bowsprit end, great baulks of timber, which drop with a splash into the water, adding another plank to the raft which is being built in readiness to float through the lock-gate into the pond at high water.

In the great shed that was removed from Woolwich are laid the keel-plates of the most powerful cruiser yet conceived. The *Shannon*, the third of her name to be built on the Medway, is one of the series of four first-class armoured cruisers of fourteen thousand six hundred tons designed by Mr P. Watts, who planned the greater portion of the splendid Japanese men-o'-war. She will have a speed of twenty-three knots. Her armament will equal in power the twelve-inch guns of the *Majestic*, with a second battery of ten 7.5 inch. Her namesake, the celebrated frigate *Shannon* (Captain Broke, who "in fighting, you must know, was the dandy, O!"), was built on the opposite shore at Frindsbury in 1806 by Brindley, who lived in the old Jacobean mansion called Quarry House, engulfed by the cement works in 1897.

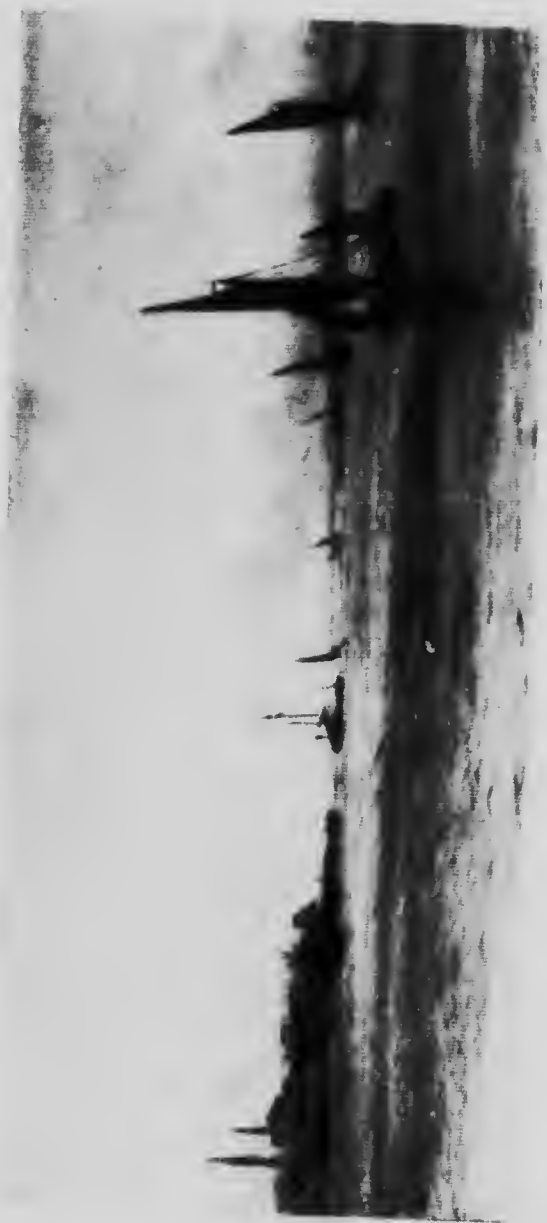
We drive past shed after shed, vast and empty and draughty; past a graving-dock, from which comes the warm smell of the anti-fouling composition from a destroyer inside, the black funnels of which show just

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CHATHAM REACH





## Cockham Wood Reach to Allington

above the caisson. Next come a long line of drawing-offices and many more slips. The old *Thunderbolt*, our first attempt to build an armoured ship (from a design lent us by the French during the Crimean War), lies here, forming the end to a jetty under the lee of which, out of the traffic, are moored the ugly ducklings of the fleet. A broad flight of stairs for the Admiral's own use, at the head of which stands a great flag-staff, leads up through a shady avenue to Admiralty House, the same to which Pepys took Lady Batten, who walked up and down "with curious looks to see how neat and rich everything is," making up her mind that she would get the dwelling from Commissioner Pett,—for it belonged formerly to the Surveyor of the Navy. In the hall still stands the old cypress chest that was part of the spoil from the Spanish and French fleet conveyed home by Sir Cloudesley Shovel after the taking of Vigo by Sir George Rooke. Arriving on October 16, he got things into such forwardness that he carried off whatever could possibly be brought home, and was sighted in the Downs on November 17, with foul ships and embarrassed with prizes. It was from this chest that on one occasion when we were at Admiralty House Cromwell's great naval flag had been taken. On the flag are emblazoned the red cross of England and the gold harp of Ireland encircled by a green wreath on a crimson ground. Cromwell, as President of the Council, instructed the Commissioners that they should carry "the red cross in one on a white flag at the stern, and the escutcheon and the harp in



## London to the Nore

the other," "being the arms of England and Ireland, both escutcheons joyned according to the pattern herewith sent you."

The lawn that runs parallel with the avenue marks the spot where the famous *Victory* was launched, nearly one hundred and fifty years ago ; and preserving the memory is an old figurehead of Nelson, with his empty sleeve pinned to his side and his left hand pointing the way to duty. Along the bank runs the ropery, one thousand two hundred and forty-eight feet of red-brick buildings joined together by little bridges in their upper stories, so that the women can walk the whole length spinning the yarns. Stacked on the wharf are great anchors and obsolete guns. Lying off in front are two hulks—the old Symonites *Helena*, now a police station, and the famous *Challenger*, which in 1872 sailed under Captain Nares, with a scientific party led by Charles Wyville Thomson, crossing and recrossing the North and the South Atlantic, the Antarctic region, to Australia, right round the Pacific, and back through the Straits of Magellan, dredging, sounding, and making the ocean-beds give up their secrets at an incredible depth. This took over three years.

Just ahead is the marine raft and steps, and above, again, the raft of the Royal Engineers' Yacht Club. The red-brick buildings continue along the bank, but have turned from the ropery into the Royal Marine Barracks, from the open windows of which drifts the tender music of Grieg's "Chanson de Solvejg" which the band is practising. St Mary's Church stands on a slight

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THE ROPERY: THE "CHALLENGER" AND THE OLD  
"THUNDERBOLT"





## Cockham Wood Reach to Allington

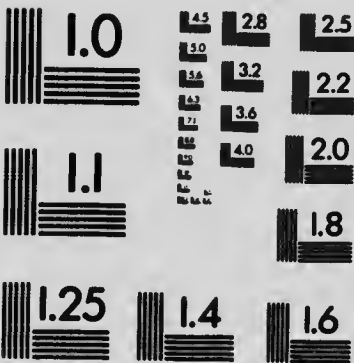
eminence. Behind it, piled tier upon tier, rise the Chatham Barracks, crowned by Prince William's Bastion, from which the gun fires at twelve o'clock. The dockyard that was begun in Elizabeth's reign only covered the site of the present ordnance wharf. In 1631 Charles the First, whose visit Phineas Pett records, on the second day reviews the remainder of his fleet that are "compleatly trimmed in all poynts," and lands at the Old Dock to view all the ordnance on the wharf; then walks on foot to the New Dock, taking notice of the rope-house and storehouses which in those days stood outside the dock gates. Between the Gun Wharf and Chatham Pier is a bight where the yachts are moored in tiers and the bawleys lie close in on the mud. Over the trees the campanile of Chatham Town Hall stands up white and new against the steep chalk-down.

Now we come to the busiest reach on the river. Steam-hoys and timber vessels are discharging alongside the wharfs. Skiffs are rowing in all directions with the youth and beauty of Chatham, keeping a wonderful zigzag course and looking for all the world like struggling flies in the milk. These, I need hardly say, are not the members of the Chatham Rowing Club. On both sides of the river moorings have been screwed down, and great tiers of barges and lighters swing at them, leaving but a narrow channel up the middle of the stream. The first three tiers are mostly sailing craft, barks and brigs and schooners; then come the screw-colliers, each surrounded by fleets of



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## London to the Nore

lighters and tugs, the coal-whippers, black as niggers, working out the cargo with noisy chaff and restless energy, running up a sort of small ladder, and springing with a bound off the top rung, hauling at the same time at the rope which whips the coal-buckets out of the hold with a jerk. Screens are rigged out, the lighters alongside being two-deep. As the coal comes rattling down the shoot, the dust all drops through the screen into the inner craft, while the lumps go bounding on into the outer one. Black figures are tipping baskets or raking the coal. A great cloud of dust is in the air, and serpentine tracks of dust go drifting up the stream. All around is boisterous merriment. The noise is deafening. Along the shore are barge-builders, slipways, and engineers; and there is a forest of cement chimneys on the north bank. We catch glimpses of grinding wheels and furnaces. Grey men are loading barges with grey bags. The throb of machinery is everywhere. The Gothic cathedral, at the moment encircled by scaffold poles, the new spire (which the eyes of our great Dean have so longed to see in place) now rising in their midst, and the Norman keep are strangely jumbled up with the workaday bustling world of the twentieth century. There are tall white cliffs where the downs once sloped gently to the river. The gasworks seem out of place as a foreground to the red-roofed old city, with its tall elms and quiet precincts.

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COLLIERS DISCHARGING





## Cockham Wood Reach to Allington

who make their living by helping the bargee to shoot his craft under the two unsightly railway bridges and the public bridge over the river, through which the current sets diagonally, necessitating the extra hand. In 1857 sappers and miners blew up the old bridge that had stood so bravely for four hundred and sixty-nine years. The present fine iron one, designed by Sir William Cubitt, took some six years to build, and was opened in 1856 with great rejoicings.

By Strood pier, where waits the *Princess of Wales*, the new steamer that makes trips every day during the summer to Sheerness and Southend, is an old-world corner where the bawley boats moor in a little cluster broadside to broadside, the trawl-nets hanging gracefully at the topmast-heads. The pier has a pair of folding lock-gates at the shore end. These are shut when there is a very high spring-tide; for the whole of waterside Strood is a long way below high-water mark, and now and then the river comes pouring over the sea-wall, flooding the basements and filling the streets knee-deep. Big mooring buoys are screwed down along both banks of Bridge Reach; great tiers of barges swing on them seven- or eight-deep. Coming round sharp, and shooting up head to wind, we run alongside one of these, and are soon brailed up and snug. The barges shooting the bridge are a wonderful sight. They never fail to stop the passer on the bridge above. Heads crane over the parapet to see the manœuvre. The wind is so light that steerage way is kept on them only by some very

## London to the Nore

hard pulling on the long sweeps. As they come towards the arch the tide gets a greater hold and hurries them through. All on board, including the women, give a helping hand with the forestay. The huffer and the mate are at the windlass, turning with all their might, slowly raising the great weight of spars and masts and sails. The captain gives a shove at the oar, or a turn at the wheel, as she gets broadside on across the tide. Barge after barge drives through, one on the top of the other; and when locked together the joint crews hoist the mast and sails of first one and then the other, the pawls of the windlass clicking excitedly, each in its own note. It all takes but a short time. They sort themselves, and a moment later are stealing over the smooth water in a long line.

As soon as our luncheon baskets are stocked we divide our party. The girls and boys go in the boat known as the *Flopper*, and we ourselves take the gig. The boys hoist their sail; but the wind is so light that we leave them easily as my crew get steadily to work and glide through the arches of the bridges. The gun booms twelve, and the workmen pour out in hundreds from Aveling and Porter's great steam-roller works on the right bank.

On the left bank, the Esplanade, guarded by the original stone balustrade of old Rochester Bridge, alone separates the river from the castle walls, in part built on the old Roman city wall, covered in ivy, from which comes the harsh cry of the peacocks. Under

## Cockham Wood Reach to Allington

the shadow of the old keep are the pier and the Rowing Club raft. Inside, along the edge of the mud, are moored the pretty little *Kittiwakes*, a one-design class, the sailing of which has been carried to perfection—nine of us, every boat alike in sail area and build—affording the keenest sport, and when all are racing one of the prettiest sights in this reach, set off as they are by the sleepy old city as a background. As we pass we wave to Mr Oswald, the captain of the class, who is thoughtfully adjusting some little *gadget* in his perfectly kept boat. "Are you sailing *Pensée* to-morrow?" he calls. "Yes: we have brought her up." "That's all right! I hope we shall have more wind than to-day!"

The Esplanade ends at the baths, turning into a footpath that passes the waterside cricket-field, and on by the river-bank, backed by a steep green hill, till it reaches the deep ditch by Medway Tower, dominated by the now obsolete Fort Clarence. On the opposite shore still stands the old Temple Manor, the brickwork of which is a deep dull red, with a big bow-window overlooking the river. A part of the original mansion, founded in 1160, in the time of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, and given by Henry the Third to the Knights Templar, still exists. It is a handsomely vaulted early-English crypt of the time of John or of Henry the Third. The rest of the house is sixteenth- or seventeenth-century. The Knights Templar kept the Manor till 1312, when Edward the Second imprisoned them on the plea that they were given to



## London to the Nore

vicious courses. Pope Clement the Fifth granted their lands and goods to the Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem. The King confirmed the grant, though before and after he had given some of the manors and estates to laymen, which brought down on the heads of these nobles and knights the curses and excommunication of Pope John the Twenty-second in 1322. This probably accounts for the Act of Parliament, next year, in which the King, nobles, and others assembled give the estate back "to godly and pious uses." Edward the Third gave it to "his dear kinswoman" Mary de St Paul, who lost her gallant bridegroom, Aymer de Valance, Earl of Pembroke, in a tournament upon her wedding day. Henry the Eighth did away with the monastery, and granted the same to Edward Elrington, who before the end of the year disposed of it to George Brooke, Lord Cobham. It reverted to the Crown in 1606; was granted to Sir Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury; and passed from hand to hand to Thomas Blayne, Dean of Rochester, and to the present family of Whittaker of Watlingtonbury.

Following the bends of the river towards the southwest, we pass the forts and convict prison at Borstal, and on the right the pretty village of Cuxton, lying on the slopes of the chalk-hills, which rise steeply into great downs some six hundred feet high on either side. The site of the little church is of great antiquity. It can boast of having had the famous Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, as rector from May to November in 1610. Roman pottery signed by "Maternus" was

## Cockham Wood Reach to Allington

found when digging the foundations for the White Hart Inn. A little farther up on the left is Starkies Castle, an old manor-house, now a farm, built in the reign of Henry the Seventh. All along the banks are salt marsh. At intervals the cement-works have driven cuttings into the downs, leaving tall white cliffs. The still air is heavy with the suspended smoke belched from countless chimneys. In a meadow by the river is the neat white camp of the sappers, who with shirt-sleeves tucked up are as busy as bees building a bridge. At this point there is a clean Hard down to low water, on which are drawn up the grey pontoons, and officers with megaphones are directing operations from either bank.

Then we pass the tiny village of Wouldham with its small early-English church on the very edge of the river, which here bends sharply to Lower Halling. Then it takes a twist to the left and bend after bend, entirely shut in by the tall rushes on either bank, over which swallows are skimming. Every now and then there is a light flop as a rat from the bank dives into the water, leaving behind it a silvery widening wake. We go past Snodland and Burham, on the side of Bluebell Hill. The old church, with its beautiful stained-glass windows, now used for funeral services only, stands deserted on the marsh, the congregation having migrated to the newer church up the hill. Here the gault, a hard blue clay under the chalk, outcrops along the whole line of the North Downs from Folkestone to Charing, on to Lenham, across the Medway to Wrotham,

## London to the Nore

and on to the distant Hog's-back at Guildford, followed along its tortuous route by the narrow Pilgrims' Way, worn on the slope of the chalk that meets it from Red Hill to Canterbury, in many places now but a grass-grown path. In this waving band of gault, ammonites and beautiful little fossil-shells are found covered with an iridescent substance like mother-of-pearl or a dull gold, also pterodactyles, and the oldest British bird, a kind of diver.

The Downs fall back on either hand as we push upstream into the Weald of Kent. Above us on the hill rise the great stones of Kentish rag known as Kit's Coty House, which, tradition says, covered the body of the British chief Catigern. Below this dolmen a field is strewn with the same boulders, called the Countless Stones, which, with other remains, seem to point to this place as being an ancient British cemetery.

"Let's lunch in this bit of shade," exclaims Harold; and he backs his oar, turning the boat's nose into the bank. The boys are not far behind. We can hear the splash of their oars and their high-pitched voices waking the echoes on the banks. It is an ideal spot to land on. A tree throws a little patch of shade. The view of Aylesford is sweet. The handsome square-towered church stands on an eminence, with red-gabled houses nestling below, interspersed by fine big elms. A beautiful old bridge spans the river. Across it the road is narrow, and the rise steep to the middle of the centre arch, which descends again steeply into the village. There is some talk of pulling the old bridge down; but

## Cockham Wood Reach to Allington

it is to be hoped that it may be spared. Just opposite to us is the Friary, the river lapping gently along the base of the creeper-covered walls—a perfect old place, less destroyed than any of the manors or monasteries in this part of Kent. After luncheon and a short rest, we paddle across to have a closer look. It is built of pretty soft-toned Kentish rag, now still more softened by nature with lichen and mosses ; and carries its weight of nearly seven hundred years in a staid, becoming manner. Radulphus Frisburn, under the patronage of Richard, Lord Gray, of Codnor, with whom he returned from the wars of the Holy Land, founded this house for Carmelites, in imitation of those whose lives he had observed in the wilderness of Palestine. They thrived so well that in 1245 there was a General Chapter of the Order held here. An old man who had lived some forty years in a hollow tree hard by was elected general, though out of the world. Henry the Eighth, after he had expelled the friars, gave this fair messuage to his rival in the affections of poor Anne Boleyn, Sir Thomas Wyatt, the poet of Allington. The redecoration was carried out with care and thought by Sir John Banks, who lived here in 1661, keeping the old where possible. Half the mullions are still stone ; the others are red brick that has paled with age to a flesh tint. The old cloister makes a splendid hall. Each arch is a deep-recessed window. The floor is paved with black and white marble. At one end of the triangle is the dining-room, panelled with oak from floor to ceiling. The great wide staircase leading to the main apartments is of

## London to the Nore

carved oak. The ball-room, some seventy feet long, has a wonderful elaborately painted, rose-festooned ceiling that rises into the gable. We pass through room after room with quaint cupboards, niches, and corners, and through one where the ghost is supposed to walk. Alongside the fireplace, in the thickness of the wall, is a small recess with a narrow-pointed doorway, with only room for a man to turn and sit. Probably this is a hiding-place ; but legend says that a monk was walled up there. Above is carved in stone the distorted face of one, all the more noticeable as it rises among the festoons of a rose cornice. The original high stone wall fronts the road that encloses the garden, with its tall trees and shady yew walk.

Passing through the great gates, we once more step into the boats and pull away up through the bridge. Aylesford, according to the *Saxon Chronicle*, was the field of the great fight between the Britons and the Saxons under Hengest and Horsa, where Horsa was slain. Tradition asserts that he was buried at Horsted ; but the mound, his supposed tomb, was cleared away, nothing being found. We pull steadily on, slipping past the pretty banks, hurrying to reach Allington. We can hear the panting of the tugs down-stream as they drag the deeply-laden barges up the winding Medway. The lock-gates are ajar as we round the bend. A stumpy pushes out towards us, the crew punting along the tall grassy banks. What a perfect spot this would be if the Corporation of Maidstone had not brought the drainage of the town to con-

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ALLINGTON LOCK







## Cockham Wood Reach to Allington

taminate the river! All around are tall elms. An emerald island studded with willow and thorn is joined to the mainland by a roaring weir on one side and the lock-gates on the other. The lock-keepers' houses nestle among the apple-trees. White posts and well-laid paths give an air of neatness to the whole.

Now the fussy tugs come bustling up. In a moment the quiet water is crowded with the many-coloured craft. The deep-red sails and heavy masts, lowered in picturesque confusion of rigging on the hatches, make a perfect picture.

Allington Castle is only a few hundred yards above the lock. A few scattered cottages and the little church and vicarage stand quite close to the entrance of the drive up to the castle, which is bordered with a glorious band of china roses in full bloom in every shade of copper colour. When Mr Falcke became the tenant of the castle, some seven or eight years ago, it was in as complete a state of dilapidation as can well be imagined. The beautiful ruins were fast crumbling away. For years it had been used as a farm-house, the courts as stack-yards; and pigs wallowed in the mire. The arrest of the decay has been looked upon by Mr and Mrs Falcke as a work of love, and the beauty of the remains, as they now stand, amply repays the trouble and hard work spent on them. Instead of a huge pile of rubbish in the roofless banqueting hall, is a lovely garden planted with geraniums, the scarlet of which harmonises with the old grey walls. The outer bailey is surrounded by high broken walls, over which

## London to the Nore

roses, vines, and ivy branch and twine. In the middle of a small lawn is the stone and ring where the poor bears were tied when baited. In front of us is a Tudor arch that leads to the inner court; on the left a Tudor porch which leads to the front door, on either side of which is a sugarloaf-shaped stone surmounted by a round flat one, which Mr Falcke lifts to show us the initials of Sir Henry Wyatt carved beneath. Inside the house everything has been done for comfort without interfering with the architecture. The tower bedrooms are quite old-world. One must have been the chapel, the window facing due east with a space for an altar and a peculiar opening to the door. Heaps of more or less mythical people built, pulled down, and rebuilt the castle from the Columbarii, Danes, and Saxons. Its possession can be traced to Ulnoth, son of Earl Godwin, Bishop Odo, Earl Warren, Sir Giles Allington (who gave the name to the parish), and Sir Stephen de Penchester, governor of Dover Castle, who with the King's permission fortified what till that date had been but a moated house. From Sir Stephen it passed to the Cobhams and the Brents, and then came into the possession of the Wyatts. Of all its owners it is the Wyatts who seem to pervade the old buildings and gardens. It was a grand home for brave old Sir Henry, who underwent torture and imprisonment, cold and hunger, even making the cruel Richard exclaim, in a fit of admiration, "Wyatt, why art thou such a fool? Thou servest for moonshine in water. Thy master is a beggarly fugitive.

## Cockham Wood Reach to Allington

Forsake him and become mine. Cannot I reward thee? I swear unto thee I will." This staunch man answered, "If I had first chosen you for my master, thus faithful would I have been to you, if you should have needed it. But the Earl, poor and unhappy though he be, is my master, and no discouragement, no allurements, shall ever drive me from him, by God's grace." When the Wars of the Roses came to an end, Sir Henry found that he had served for something better than moonshine in water. He was made a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, a Knight Banneret, Master of the Jewel House, Treasurer of the King's Chamber, and a Privy Councillor; and rich enough to buy Allington Castle, then one of the noblest piles in Kent. One can imagine his son Sir Thomas and Anne Boleyn wandering in the pleasanter and along the little path by the moat, the swans coming to their call and the pigeons circling in the air from the great stone columbarium. A sad man it must have been that later penned heart-sick verses—one to whom the word "remember" was surely never needed. After the rebellion of Sir Thomas, his son, this castle was confiscated. Later, it was given with the Wyatt office of "Keeper of the Jewels" to John Attey, who, preferring his palace at Maidstone, suffered this castle to sink into decay. In 1720 the estate passed into the hands of the family of the present owner, Lord Romney.

Mr and Mrs Falcke were indefatigable in their kindness, and our interest in all they showed us led us

## London to the Nore

on and on all over the place, until reluctantly we were obliged to tear ourselves away. We reached the barge rather silent, a little tired, and very hungry. All hands agreeing that it had been a delightful expedition, and that the racing ebb was a great help on the homeward journey.



Allington Castle



## CHAPTER XX

### ROCHESTER

“**R**OCHESTER ys but a little cittie,” said William Smith, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant, who has left us such a good picture of Rochester in 1588. Could he but see the Rochester of to-day, joined by one continuous High Street from Frindsbury through Strood, across the bridge, through Rochester, Chatham, and on and on, the houses as thick as they can be placed on either side, his surprise would know no bounds. In his manuscript, *The Particular Description of England*, presented to Queen Elizabeth, and now in the British Museum, he writes :

## London to the Nore

"Rochester ys but a little cittie, but very ancient, as may appeare by the walles thereof, which now in many places are gone to decay, also the Castell, which seemeth to be builded when the Tower of London was, and is lyke ye same building. The cheiffest Church is called St Andrewes. There is a very fayer bridge of stone, founded by S<sup>r</sup> Robt. Knolles, knight, with a chapell at ye est end thereof, which bridge is builded uppon pyles, lyke as London Bridge is, I meane, in the selfe same manner. The River of Medway passeth under the said bridge. It is of such depth that all the Quenes Ma<sup>ties</sup> shippes do ryde there, at a low water, all along the river from Rochester to Upnor Castell. And thus much touching ye cittie of Rochester, whose picture hereafter enseweth."

Like London, Rochester is supposed to have had a Roman bridge ; but no one seems to know at what date this was superseded by the Saxon wooden bridge that Lambard speaks of as more "anncient in time, though lesse beautiful in woorke." According to Stow, the bridge was first mentioned in 1215. In an ancient record at Christ Church, Canterbury, it is plainly shown who are to be responsible for its repair. The Bishop of Rochester had to keep in order the land pier on the east side of the river and the third pier, to plank five yards and a half, and to lay six large beams. Help in its upkeep was to be given by the villages of "Borstale, Cuckstone, Frindsbury, and Stoke, Halling, Trottesclive, Malling, Southfleet, Stanes, Penenden, and Fakenham." The second pier belonged to Gillingham

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THE CITY OF ROCHESTER





## Rochester

and Chatham, which had to provide three beams and plank one yard. The fourth pier was that of the King, who had to lay three beams and plank three yards and a half, and had to help him "Aylesford and all the Hundreds pertaining to it," as well as "Ockley, Smal-land, Cosington, Dudsland, Gislardsland, and Woldham, Burham, Acclife, Horsted, Farley and Teston, Chalk, Honhirst Edon, Bonehold and Lose, Lillington, Stock-bury and Sineland, Daleland, and Leelebundland," which seems a great many villages for only three beams and the planking for three yards and a half. The Archbishop of Canterbury, with twenty-three villages to help, had the fifth and ninth piers to look after. "The sixth pier is to be done by Hollingborne, and all that Hundred which belongs to it; four yards to plank and four beams to lay." "The seventh and eighth piers belong to the men of the Hundred of Hoo; six beams to lay and four yards and a half to plank." This last, our straggly Hundred, was evidently more heavily taxed than the rest of Kent. Denne thinks that this bridge cannot have been more than ten feet wide. It resembled a modern light pier or small railway bridge of wood, and mention is made of a drawbridge and barbican. The danger in crossing was often great. This may be gathered from the story of the rash youth who, instead of dismounting from his horse, as was usual, to cross the bridge, sat tight. The animal, alarmed, leapt into the river, and both were drowned. About this time a poor minstrel, or harper, described the bridge as "very dangerous"—over it "many a

## London to the Nore

one had fallen." He had reached "mid-way" when a violent gust of wind blew him into the Medway. In his distress he called to the Virgin for help :—

"Help wswyf, help wsvyf;  
Oiyer nu—I forga mi lyf."

"Our Lady" graciously deigned to save him, he all the while harping her praises as he floated down the stream. At length he landed—so the fabliau of the "Harpur a Roucestre" says—about a league from the city, and, followed by a crowd who had witnessed the minstrel's mishap, made his way to a church, "situated in the said place," to offer up his thanks to the Virgin for this miraculous act of preservation. The song of the "Harpur," contained in a Cottonian manuscript in the British Museum, consists of ninety-nine lines of Norman-French verse :—

"De vogle aukes dyre  
Entre Lundres e Canterbyre  
A Roucestre, ce oy cunter,  
U checun jur a munte la meer  
Avait un punt mu periluez,  
Dunt maint home fu dechus.

Ja en milu de la punt fu  
Taunt ly traversout le vent du su,  
Ki en milu li ad gete,  
Que Meduay est apelle," etc.

This old bridge lasted from 960 until about 1387 ;  
but through the frailness of its structure it was a never-

## Rochester

ceasing trouble, so often out of repair that people were obliged to cross in boats. In 1309 it was much damaged by floating ice, and had to be repaired in a substantial way; but the taking of Calais in 1347 so augmented its use that the bridge became both insufficient and unsafe. The stone bridge was begun—and completed, says Denne—in 1392. The new bridge was chiefly the work of Sir Robert Knolles and Sir John de Cobham. It was a very handsome structure and for "height and strength was allowed," says Denne, "to be superior to any in England, excepting the bridges at London and Westminster. It is above five hundred and sixty feet long and fourteen feet broad, with a stone parapet on each side, strongly coped and crowned with a high iron balustrade. It has eleven arches, supported by strong piers."

Rochester Bridge, like old London Bridge, was famed throughout the world. Hardly a man or woman of note landed in England that did not pass over the Medway on their way to the sacred shrine at Canterbury. From the Continent, landing at Dover, people passed through Rochester on their way to London.

Among the treasures in Eastgate House Mr Payne has collected line engravings of most of these notables, with little descriptions of their sojourns. The Crown Inn, which dates from 1300, was for crowned heads the popular hotel of the day. The dangers in crossing the bridge were great. On February 18, 1300, Edward the First made a progress in Kent, and passed

## London to the Nore

through Rochester, where he bestowed money on several shrines, and recompensed Richard Lamberd for the loss of a horse which was blown over by the wind into the Medway, and there drowned. In 1314 "Isabel Bruce, the Queen of Robert Bruce, was detained in Rochester Castle from March till October. The writ issued by King Edward the Second on March 12, printed in Rymer's '*Fœdera*,' commands Henry de Cobham, the Constable, to receive her into his custody, to assign for her use a suitable chamber within the said castle; that the sum of twenty shillings be allowed for her weekly expenses; and also that she should be permitted at convenient times to walk, under safe custody, within the precincts of the aforesaid castle and the Priory of St Andrew. The day of the Lady Isabel's freedom, however, was near. The Battle of Bannockburn, so fatal to the English, was fought on June 24, and on October 2 the Constable of Rochester Castle is directed to conduct the wife, sister, and daughter of Robert Bruce to Carlisle, where an exchange of prisoners was made."

In 1356 John the Second, King of France, was taken prisoner by Edward the Black Prince at the battle of Poitiers. He was kept captive in England for three years. On his way back to Calais, on July 2, 1360, he made an offering at the church of Rochester of forty crowns, valued at six pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence. Next day he dined at Sittingbourne, and supped and slept at Ospringe. About the beginning of May 1410, Sigismund, Emperor of Germany,

## Rochester

passed through this town with a magnificent retinue of one thousand knights on his road to London to visit King Henry the Fifth. At Rochester he was received by John, Duke of Bedford, the King's third brother. The Emperor was created a Knight of the Garter at Windsor, and stayed in this country for four months. Then came Louis de Bruges, Seigneur de la Gruuthuyse, an eminent patron of learned men, particularly of Colard Mansion, the first printer in Bruges, who possessed a magnificent library of manuscripts. Edward the Fourth received him in England, and entertained him with great honour, creating him Earl of Winchester in September 1472. In the British Museum is a manuscript narrative of his arrival in England, containing a passage relating to the reception at Rochester : "And when the Lord Grauthuse com to Rochester, he was presented by the Meyre and his bretheren to his souper with wyne, capons, fezantes, partryches ; and after souper with frute and swete wyne."

In 1480 Margaret of York, widow of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, visited her brother Edward the Fourth, being entrusted by Maximilian, Duke of Austria, with a negotiation, the object of which was to endeavour to withdraw the English monarch from his engagements with the King of France, Louis the Eleventh, and to obtain a supply of troops. He informed the Duke of the success of the negotiation in two letters—one dated London, July 27, and the other Rochester, September 14, 1480. Henry the Seventh was here twice, in 1492 and in 1498. On



## London to the Nore

both occasions sums were paid "to the fery bote of Rochester in rewarde, £2"—a sign that the stone bridge, at that time a century old, was out of repair. A few months afterwards the King contributed five pounds to "the Mayor of Rochester toward the brige." Archbishop Morton had a much more lucrative idea. He granted indulgences, remitting from purgatory all manner of sins for forty days to all persons who would contribute towards the repairs. His Grace had such success that the bridge was well renovated, and twenty years later Archbishop Deane was able to adorn a great part of the bridge with iron bars neatly wrought.

One of the most splendid royal visits ever paid to England was that of Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany, who in 1522 came over with a retinue of some two thousand persons, who had to be provided with lodgings in Rochester, "or nere adjonyng thereunto in gentlemen's house." Henry the Eighth accompanied the Emperor from Dover. On May 31 the two sovereigns came to Sittingbourne, and on Sunday, June 1, to Rochester.

Stow reports the meeting of Henry the Eighth with Anne of Cleves in 1540:—"The King, being ascertained of her arrival and approach, was wonderfull desirous to see her, of whom hee had heard so great commendations, and thereupon hee came very privately to Rochester, where hee took the first view of her, and when hee had well beheld her, hee was marvelously astonished that hee knew not well what to do or say. Hee brought with him divers things, which hee ment

## Rochester

to present her with his owne hands : that is to say, a partlet, a mufler, a cup, and other things ; but being sodainly quite discouraged and amazed with her presence, his mind changed, and hee delivered them unto Sir Anthony Browne, to give them unto her, but with as small shew of kingly kindness as might be. The King, being sore vexed with the sight of her, began to utter his heart's griefe unto divers ; amongst whom hee said unto the Lord Admirall, 'How like you this woman ? Doe you think her so personable, faire, and beautifull as report hath beene made unto mee of her ? I pray you, tell mee true.' The Admirall answered, 'I take her not for faire, but to be of a browne complexion.' 'Alas,' said the King, 'whom shall men trust ? I promise you I see no such thing in her as hath bin shewed mee of her, either by pictures or report, and am ashamed that men have praised her as they have done, and I like her not.' "

The Duke of Nájera, a Spanish nobleman, whose travels were written by his secretary, Pedro de Gante, in 1543-4, writes : "Saturday, the 9th of February, the Duke and suite departed from Canterbury, and proceeded seven leagues to the town of Rochester, consisting of about five hundred houses, near which flows a beautiful river. There is an elegant stone bridge of eleven large arches, and on the top of the parapet is on each side an iron railing."

Other notables that passed through or stayed in Rochester were the Duke of Sully, Ambassador from Henry the Fourth, King of France, to James the First ;

## London to the Nore

and in 1604 James, who offended the seamen and nobles by the little interest he took in the fleet he had come to see. Christian the Fourth, King of Denmark, and brother to James's queen, was met by the Mayor, "who, taking his footcloth horse which was ready, rode on before his Majestie to the house of the Right Worshipful Sir Peter Bucke (old Eastgate House), which house was the lodging of the King of Denmark, whom our King there left to his repose."

Phineas Pett tells how Prince Henry took his barge at Whitehall by five of the clock, and was received, after the sea manner, with trumpets and drums. After he had refreshed himself, and the watermen had been relieved with fresh spells, he went against the tide to Queenborough and on to Upnor, "and so, passing about by all the ships," was landed at the old dock at Chatham a little before six at night.

Frederick, Elector Palatine, passed through on his return to his dominions with his bride, Princess Elizabeth, eldest daughter of James the First. Possuma Albertus, Prince of Transylvania, being worsted by the Germans, was compelled to seek help from Charles the Second, who received him kindly and gave him a sufficient maintenance; but this poor Prince was villainously murdered in 1661 by his coachman and a footboy on Gad's Hill. He is buried in the cathedral. James the Second escaped from a house in the High Street, now occupied by the dentist Mr Picnot. Peter the Great came to see a ship launched. William Hogarth and his friends, Scott, Tothall, Thornhill, and

## Rochester

Forrest, made a merry party in 1732, writing a journal of their doings, illustrated by Hogarth, that was printed in 1782. Dr Samuel Johnson, a year before he died, and after he had been very ill, at the age of seventy-four, visited his friend Mr Bennet Langton at his house in Rochester. The *Morning Chronicle* was "happy to find that Dr Johnson has recovered his health considerably at Rochester." On reaching London on July 23, the Doctor writes to Mrs Thrale: "I have been thirteen days at Rochester, and am just now returned. I came back by water in a common boat, twenty miles for a shilling, and when I landed at Billingsgate I carried my budget myself to Cornhill before I could get a coach, and was not much incommoded. . . . While I was with Mr Langton, we took four little journies in a chaise, and made one little voyage on the Medway, with four misses and their maid, but they were very quiet. I am very well, except that my voice soon falters, and I have not slept well, which I imputed to the heat, which has been such as I never felt before for so long time. Whether this short rustication has done me any good, I cannot tell; I certainly am not worse, and am very willing to think myself better." A little more than a year rolled by and Samuel Johnson was no more in the world.

These facts I have gathered from *Arch. Cent.*, vol. vi. pp. 43-81.

It gratifies us to think that it was a gentleman in Rochester who bought that great genius Turner the colours with which to make his first effort in oil-paint-

## London to the Nore

ing—a view of Rochester Castle, with fishermen drawing their boats ashore in a gale of wind.

We have been, and are, favoured above the many. In the Court News details may be found of the coming of Queen Victoria to visit her wounded soldiers from the Crimea ; the unveiling of the statue of Gordon by the King when Prince of Wales ; the return of Lord Kitchener from Khartoum ; the laying of a stone for a volunteer drill hall by Lord Roberts ; the launching of a ship by the Princess of Wales ; and the visit of our King to his own regiment, the Royal Engineers—not forgetting our Navy and the great men who command on sea and land.

In 1573 good Queen Bess, during her summer progress, arrived in Rochester, and remained four days at the Crown Inn—"the only place," says Francis Thymne, a Kentish man, "to entertain Princes coming thither, as in my time I have seene both King Philip and the Queen to have rested themselves there." On the Sunday her Majesty attended divine service and heard a sermon in the Cathedral. On the last day she was entertained by that charitable man, but withal most determined enemy to rogues and proctors, Master Richard Watts, in his own house, which lies to the right of Boley Hill, behind the castle. The Queen having expressed her pleasure on her departure with the word "*Satis*," the name was given to the house, which is known by it to this day. At the same time Master Richard Watts was appointed by the Queen paymaster, surveyor, and clerk of the castle at Upnor, with instruc-

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tions that the stone for its building should be taken from the ruined walls of Rochester Castle. This same Master Richard Watts, by his will, dated August 22, 1579, left certain estates to trustees for the relief of six poor travellers, not being rogues or proctors; who might receive gratis for one night lodging, entertainment, and fourpence each. Dickens, in his splendidly told tale of *The Seven Poor Travellers*, opened the eyes of the public to the iniquitous way in which the charity was being administered. He wrote: "I had been a little startled, in the Cathedral, by the emphasis with which the effigy of Master Richard Watts was bursting out of his tomb; but I began to think, now, that it might be expected to come across the High Street some stormy night, and make a disturbance here." The "Presence," as he calls his guide, leads him first "into the low room on the right," "where the travellers sit by the fire, and cook what bits of supper they buy for their fourpence." "'O! Then they have no entertainment?' said I. For the inscription over the outer door was still running in my head, and I was mentally repeating, in a kind of tune, 'Lodging, entertainment, and fourpence each.' 'They have a fire provided for 'em, and these cooking utensils,' returns the Presence. 'And this what's painted on a board is the rules for their behaviour.'" Dickens goes through the room, "admiring the snug fireside, . . . and has a glimpse of the street through the low mullioned window and of the beams overhead." "'It is very comfortable,' said I. 'In-convenient,' observes the matronly Presence; and, questioned as to why

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it should be so to the six poor travellers, the Presence retorts : ' I don't mean them ; I speak of its being an in-convenience to myself and my daughter, having no other room to sit in of a night.' " The next room, of similar dimensions, is used as the board-room, so that the six poor travellers would have only the two little entrance galleries at the back, where their beds were. The greater part of the space is taken up with a huge open fireplace in each room. The chimney, going straight up, is wide enough at the top for the sun to shine down. Going back to the board-room, Dickens found, from a printed account of the charity hanging on the wall, " that the greater part of the property bequeathed by the Worshipful Master Richard Watts for the maintenance of the foundation was at the period of his death mere marsh land ; but that in course of time it had been reclaimed and built upon, and was considerably increased in value." " He found, too, that about a thirtieth part of the annual revenue was being expended on the purpose commemorated over the arched door. The rest was being handsomely laid out in Chancery expenses, collectorship, receivership, poundage, and other legal appendages ; " furnishing one more illustration of human greed in the perversion of charitable trusts. However, the trust is now administered by the Charity Commissioners, and is the most important in the three towns of Strood, old Rochester, and Chatham. It furnishes them with an almshouse, nurses, baths, a hundred pounds a year for apprentice premiums, a thousand pounds towards the upkeep of St Bartholo-

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mew's Hospital, seven shillings a week to six pensioners, and two hundred pounds a year for scholarships. The income, originally thirty-six pounds sixteen shillings and eightpence a year, has grown to four thousand pounds. The original house still stands, "clean and white, of staid and venerable air, with the quaint old door, choice little, long, low lattice-windows, and a roof of three gables" facing the High Street on the left-hand side.

"Rochester is full of gables, with old beams and timbers carved into strange faces," and from the front of a "grave red-brick building" projects a queer old clock, "as if time carried on business there, and hung out his sign." This is all that is left of the old clock-house built by the gallant Sir Cloudesley Shovel, whose portrait hangs in company with those of William the Third, Queen Anne, Master Richard Watts, and many others, in the Guildhall, likewise a sober building supported on columns forming an open basement flagged with stone, where Hogarth and Scott played their memorable game of hopscotch. Farther down, on the same side of the High Street, is Eastgate House, the gem of the old houses in the city. It has been beautifully restored under the supervision of Mr Stephen Aveling and Mr Payne—not to speak of the caretaker, who, with infinite patience and soft soap alone, cleaned off centuries of paint from the carved fireplaces, doors, and beams, leaving the wood and carving as fresh as though the workmen of 1590 had just left. Sir Peter Bucke chose his position well in the old days—outside the East Gate—and a sweet spot



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it must have been : gay with the life of the High Street passing on one side, and the gardens leading to the river on the other. It is easy to imagine the pleasure he must have felt when sailing up the river, guided home by the glow of the lantern gleaming from the bow-window of his own house. Then the girls' feet which later tripped up and down the wide oak stair at the school of Rosa Budd, who was taken out on holidays by Edwin Drood to the lumps-of-delight shop ! Mr Tucker's, one would imagine. Later, the old house was used as a workmen's club, and then as the meeting-place of the Young Men's Christian Association. A few years ago the Corporation bought it ; and here it stands, its perfect self the chief attraction, a coffer for all the relics found in the neighbourhood—rude flint flakes that the hand of man alone could have made, grading into graceful neolithic knives and arrow-heads, which in their turn give way to bronze implements, spear-heads, and swords ; coins stamped with the heads of a long succession of Roman Emperors ; funeral urns, and pottery of all sorts ; Saxon fibula and umbos, relics of every age ; carved arm-chairs and beds of the same date as the house ; and in the hall a long oak table subscribed for by the ladies who years ago adorned and were educated in this select seminary.

Our cruise is over. It is with sadness we watch the barge sail away, taken over by our partner, under another flag. An American would call this a "mean moment." It certainly is so as I watch the vessel

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disappearing on the horizon. Thinking over all we have seen, I feel I have not described one quarter of the life and movement that have been going on around us all these days. A question arises: Why do we as a nation think so much of going abroad? Close to our doors lie wonderful scenes. Londoners know very little of the beautiful river on which they depend. To artists it has always had a peculiar fascination, which we share in common with Turner, Constable, and Whistler.





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