

STORMS BURST OVER ENGLAND SMALL RIVER BECOMES A GREAT FLOOD

Remarkable Disaster in a
Lincolnshire Town

EXTRAORDINARY SCENES

The British Islands are singularly free from those violent outbursts of nature that visit other lands and do such damage in town and country.

Earthquakes and tornadoes are practically unknown, but occasionally a thunderstorm or cloudburst proves very destructive, and of late there has been a succession of severe storms which have done much damage.

The most serious visitation was in Lincolnshire, where, as the result of a cloudburst, the quiet town of Louth was flooded, hundreds of people being rendered homeless, and many drowned.

Washed Away on a Pillar Box

The small river Lud runs through the town, and during a thunderstorm one afternoon, without the slightest warning, the sluggish stream became a raging torrent that swept through the town, carrying everything before it. Bridges were borne away, streets and houses invaded, trees uprooted, and motor-cars and other vehicles overturned and swept along with furniture and people.

Owing to the storm most of the inhabitants were in their homes, and some of these were trapped and drowned even in the upper storeys.

The wife of a butcher who lost three of her children saved herself and her baby by holding on to a bacon hook in the ceiling of her shop. A girl who took refuge on a pillar-box was washed away with the pillar-box. A baby was washed out of its mother's arms. An invalid old lady was rescued from a sofa on which she was floating.

Whirlwind and Cloudburst

The storm seems to have swept across England from North Wales, and after spreading death and destruction in Lincolnshire, it spent itself in Cambridge, where a house was wrecked by lightning.

The total deaths at Louth on the first day were 24; 50 houses were destroyed and a thousand people made homeless.

East Anglia has several times been the scene of flood. An excess of rain causes considerable damage in the Fen country, and even in Lincolnshire this is not the first time a cloudburst has brought destruction. Jean Ingelow has commemorated one such flood in a poem, where she tells how

The feet had hardly time to flee
Before it brake against the knee
And all the world was in the sea.

In 1917 a severe flood occurred in Buckinghamshire, which at the time was said to be caused by a waterspout. Waterspouts, however, can only occur over the sea or great sheets of water, where the spray of the lashing waves is drawn up by a whirlwind to meet the heavy clouds, and circles round and round till something causes the column to burst.

Mystery Hole at Chiswick

On land the whirlwind often twists a heavy cloud round and round until it appears to burst and the rain falls with exceptional suddenness and volume. Such a cloudburst occurred in Lincolnshire and caused the recent disaster at Louth—the town, by the way, where Tennyson went to school and where his first poems were published in 1827.

At Chiswick, on the outskirts of London, after a powerful flash of lightning, a hole was found in a garden, and some people thought a meteor had fallen, though meteors have nothing whatever to do with storms and lightning. They dug, but could find nothing. Possibly the hole was caused by a fireball, commonly known as a thunderbolt, which is really a dangerous form of lightning called globe lightning. On the other hand, it has been suggested that the hole may have been due to a subsidence of the earth over an open drain.

Children Camp Where Caesar Came RICHBOROUGH AND ITS ANCIENT STORY

New Life in the Streets Where
Roman History Lies Buried

FIVE HUNDRED LITTLE INVADERS FROM THE FALLEN CAPITAL

It will be pleasant news to children of this country, who have so nobly helped the children of Vienna, that nearly 500 Vienna children are now being brought to England, and are living just now in a quarantine camp at Richborough.

They are the first company of children to arrive from the starving regions of Central Europe, and we may look forward to three great results from their stay here. It will surely restore their lost health, it will release more food for those children remaining in Vienna, and it will build up, let us hope, a lasting friendship for England in these little people. They are very welcome invaders, and they land on historical soil, for here at Richborough there came invaders long ago.

Landing of the Romans

We have all heard of Richborough during the war, for it became what was known as our Mystery Port; but it is not often realised that this port, which the Great War found deserted, was one of the gateways of England centuries ago.

At Richborough landed the Roman legions that conquered southern Britain. Here was then a great estuary dividing Kent from Thanet. Sea tides lapped against Richborough cliff, which had been for centuries the main port of invasion of Britain. Gaulish chieftains had come with fleets of boats to the safe harbourage of Richborough, and conquered the country. When the Romans arrived, they built great castles and made Richborough camp the key to southern Britain.

Dover and other channel ports were then of small importance in comparison with Richborough. Legion after legion passed for 400 years through the great camp, and left behind them so much money that thousands of Roman coins have been found.

A Thousand Years of Ruin

When the Saxon pirates became dangerous, Richborough was a city of war like Gibraltar. The Roman fleet sheltered by the River Wantsum. Inside the huge walls of the castle the tide of life ran merrily. Men from all parts of the ancient world, with wives from all races between Scotland and Mesopotamia, trafficked with the native fishing folk.

Larger than London was Richborough in those days, and the fierce, roving Englishmen, hungry for the wealthy and fertile land of Kent, could make no landing while the castle held the Roman legion. But at last the Roman went and the Englishman came, the fishing folk drew back to their native Welsh mountains, and the forces of nature reduced Richborough apparently to nothingness.

Century after century the slow, sleepy Stour brought down more silt from the heart of Kent, the sandbanks of the Goodwins kept off the scouring tide, the bed of the River Wantsum filled up.

The Transformation

Sandwich was built out of the stones of Richborough city, and a long succession of hermits in the mouldering Roman castle saw the famous fortress pass away. The oyster-beds were buried under mud, the watch-towers of the castle crumbled, the beautiful mansions of the great barracks decayed. At the end of a thousand years only the ploughmen, continually turning up old coins, bits of fine pottery and glasswork, and the toys of Roman children, knew what lay beneath the sand and mud. Richborough was forgotten.

Then, with extraordinary suddenness, came the Great War transformation. Somebody remembered Richborough. Engineers went down to see if the Romans had been right in preferring Richborough to Dover. They wanted the same thing as the Romans did—good harbourage, secure against the enemy and against tempest and tide. They found it all at Richborough.

Once more, quietly and almost in secret, Richborough became the gate of war between this island and the continent. The shepherds vanished with their sheep, and over miles of marshland the wonder-working engineers built one of the most marvellous cities in the history of the world. What the Romans took centuries to do our men did in a few months.

A concrete town arose. It spread over three and a half square miles of marshland, and was served by eighty miles of railway sidings, along which plied half-a-million railway trucks, supplying new factories, shipbuilding yards, locomotive repairing shops, and bringing down stores for shipment to France.

Changing the Countryside

In place of the Roman legion that used to hold the great town came twenty thousand British troops, who laboured for victory with the discipline of a perfect human machine. Every man in the place was a soldier, and there were thousands of unskilled labourers for whom highly skilled work was waiting. So they went into training schools, and came out as motor-launch pilots, riveters, divers, surveying assistants, shipbuilders, and engineers, with a rapidity unparalleled in ordinary life.

The face of the countryside was changed. A large stretch of land under the sea was built up eight feet above high-water level to form a repairing aerodrome. The sleepy Stour was widened 500 feet into a sea canal, and the channel was deepened until ships could be moored by the spot where the Roman admiral used to keep his fleet.

A hill stood in the way of the scheme for the eighty miles of railway sidings, and the hill vanished. The marshland was drained, and the old water ditches were either filled up or deepened. The River Stour was lifted from its bed, and sent in another direction along a mile of armoured concrete dockside. Where it used to be possible to jump across the Stour at low water was now a mighty river crowded with ships, boats, and barges, ringing with powerful machinery and steam traffic.

Trains Over the Sea

But the wonder of the wonder port was the train ferry. This was the glory of New Richborough. Down her immense sidings trains came carrying railway guns, tanks, and other huge machines of war; and instead of days being spent while electric cranes lifted the material from the trains into ships, the whole train was shunted over the dockside on to one of the ferry boats. It took only 25 minutes to shunt two heavy goods trains on to a ferry, to chain-lock the trucks to the deck, and fuel and water the steamer. Then the boat steamed out of the Stour, and went snorting towards the battle line.

The Richborough train ferry bridged the English Channel. It was one of the greatest works of the war, and was a good war substitute for the Channel Tunnel.

And so once more, after all the centuries, Richborough came into its own again, taking a proud place in the nation's life.

CONSTANTINOPLE AND ITS SECRETS GREAT HOPE OF SCHOLARS AND TRAVELLERS

Will the Lost Treasures of
Antiquity be Found?

MISSING MASTERPIECES

With Constantinople more or less under the control of the European nations, scholars are hoping that some of the lost literary treasures of antiquity will be found.

Many of these were undoubtedly taken to Constantinople in the early days, and we know that the eastern capital of the Roman Empire possessed one of the finest libraries of ancient times.

Constantine began the collection, and his successors continued to add to the treasures of the capital until the library had at least 100,000 volumes, many of them being manuscripts that would now be worth a king's ransom.

But many times in history the library suffered at the hands of invaders; and after the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, in 1453, it seems to have vanished. What was its fate? Scholars have never solved the problem.

Treasures That Have Been Lost

Some believe that many of the priceless Greek manuscripts must have survived, and are somewhere hidden among the Sultan's archives; and these scholars hope that under the new régime the manuscripts may be discovered, and many lost works of classic authors restored to the world.

It must be remembered that though the Greek and Latin authors wrote voluminously in the golden age of literature, only a very small fraction of their work has come down to us. For instance, of the comedies of Aristophanes, every one a masterpiece, only eleven have survived out of the 54 he wrote. Of the marvellous tragedies of Euripides we have only 18 out of 84, and of those of Sophocles only seven—not a tithe of the number he produced.

Will the Rest of Euclid be Found?

It is the same with the great Latin authors. Of Livy's history not more than a fourth exists today, and of that of Tacitus only four books out of 12 survive.

Thousands of the world's literary masterpieces have been lost for centuries, but some may yet be found at Constantinople. Perhaps the missing books of Euclid may turn up there.

The greatest library of ancient times was that of Alexandria, which is said to have possessed 700,000 volumes. Many stories have been told of its fate, and one declares that the Caliph Omar, when he took the city in the year 638, sent the books to the furnaces to heat the 4000 public baths of Alexandria. "If these books contain anything contrary to the Word of God," he is reported to have said, "they are evil; and if they do not, they are superfluous."

Secrets Hidden at Fez

Some scholars believe that part of the treasures of the Alexandrian library were saved, and may one day be found in the archives of the Sultans of Morocco at Fez. An American traveller was once allowed to peep into the vaults there, and saw many parchment manuscripts, though he was not allowed to handle them. Here again, with Morocco coming under European influence, we may recover classic works well worth their weight in gold. Perhaps even some of the original writings of the New Testament may come to light.

Many rare literary works lost for centuries have been recovered from the monasteries of the East, and there is nothing at all improbable about these new hopes of the scholars.

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