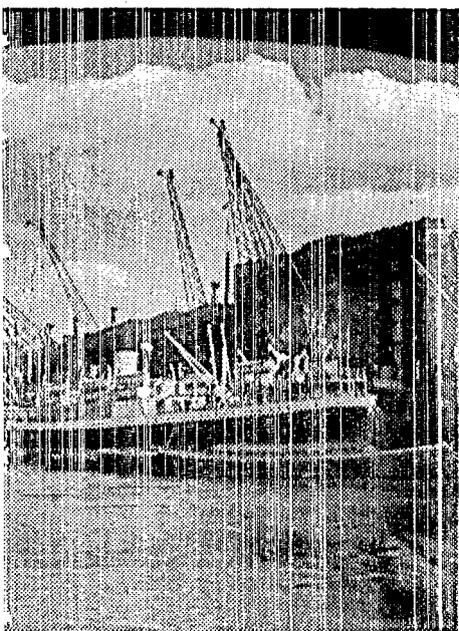


FAMILY

and the Wandle from the south and the Brent from the north. Nearly all the old streams in the basin of London are now below its streets, but the invaluable Lee bears merchandise from London docks as far north as Ware and Hertford. With its feeders the Stort, the Ash, the Rib, the Beane, and the Maran, the Lee carries the rain from the Chilterns of Bedford, Hertford, and their foot-hills in Essex. Leaving London, the Thames flows between Essex and Kent, receiving the Roding from Essex and the Darent and the Medway from Sussex and Kent.

From the earliest times when the Goidels rowed up the river centuries



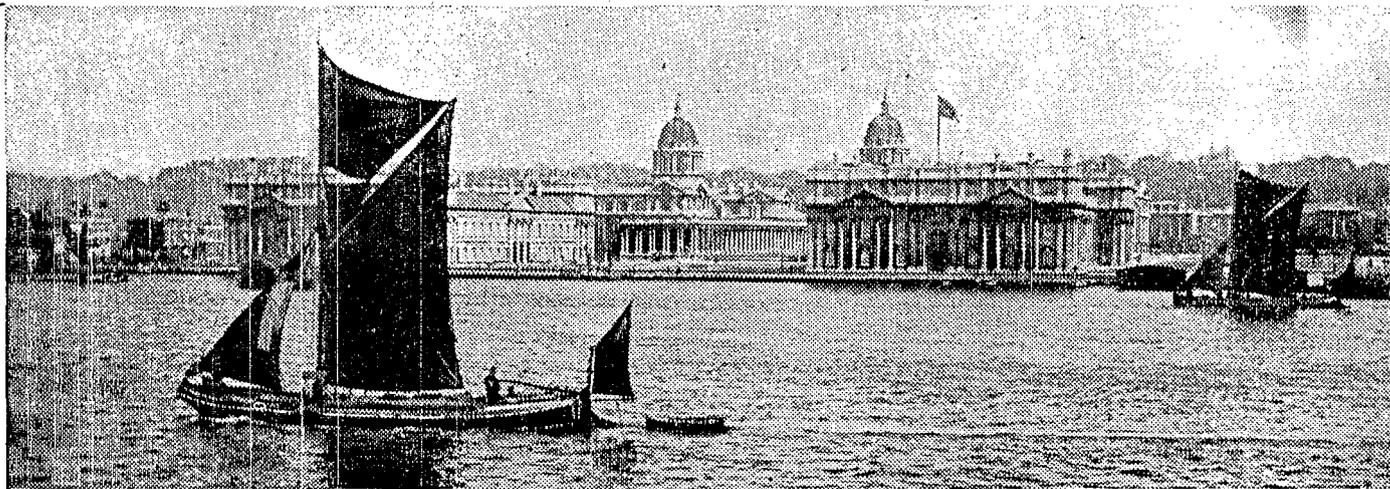
near Tower Bridge

before the Roman Era to hold sway over the New Stone Age race until those recent days when our ironclads steamed out to do battle in the North Sea, the Thames has been imbued with the history of our land. The Britons came here about 400 B C and used London as a base for both conquest and trade. Caesar remarked on the civilisation of the numerous people who lived there, and the Romans who came a hundred years later made a port and stronghold of London, built its first bridge, and made roads from it like spokes from the hub of a wheel.

The Castles and Palaces Along the River Banks

THE Saxons came up the Thames, and hundreds of years later the Vikings followed them and settled along its banks, as their place-names Woolwich and Chelsea remind us. William the Conqueror built a castle on its first tributary at Rochester, and a fortress by London Bridge to be known ever after as The Tower.

Barons and kings and courtiers built castles and palaces along its banks, while monks and nuns found peace beside its sheltered reaches. At Westminster, Greenwich, Hampton Court, and Windsor our rulers framed, and still frame, the laws of our land, and at Runnymede and Oxford the freedom of our people was won from reluctant rulers. In later years Oxford has risen to lead the land in culture, and more lately still the Universities



The great group of buildings known as Greenwich Hospital, designed by Wren, Inigo Jones, and other famous architects



One of the finest river views in London—Looking across Lambeth Bridge to the Houses of Parliament

of London and Reading have risen on its banks. Great public schools abound beside it, Eton and Marlborough, Charterhouse, Westminster, and many another dating back hundreds of years.

Looking back through the centuries we find the river a barrier and a boundary between hostile tribes and forces. Many a fight, from the days of Julius Caesar to the great Civil War, has taken place at its fords. Its bridges have been broken to impede the march of armies, and castles have been built and sacked along its banks.

When peace came finally to our shores the Thames began to bear for over a hundred miles a great stream of trade. Before the railways came to find easy gradients along its shores barges brought the world's produce to the inland towns from the sailing ships moored at London's wharves or strung in lines across the lower reaches, and the mother river of England was linked by canals with the Severn and other rivers. Barges can ply to Lechlade, the junction with the Thames and Severn Canal, projected away back in the reign of Charles the Second and completed in 1790. From Abingdon, and also by way of the Kennet, canals run to the Avon, and through the Cherwell goes a waterway to Birmingham. Some of these waterways are neglected, but from Brentford in the west of London, and from the docks in the east, runs the Grand Union Canal, now improved

so that merchandise can float between the greatest cities of England.

To serve this traffic over 40 locks have been built: Teddington, the limit of the tidal waters, Molesey, Sunbury, Shepperton, Chertsey, Pentonhook, Bell Weir near Staines, Old Windsor, Romney, Boveney, Bray, Boulter's at Taplow, Cookham, Marlow, Temple, with Hurley close by, Hambledon, Marsh near Wargrave, Shiplake, Sonning, Caversham, Mapledurham, Whitchurch, Goring, Cleve, Wallingford, Benson, Day's at Little Wittenham, Clifton, Culham, Abingdon, Sandford, Ifley, Osney at Oxford, Godstow, Pinkhill, Northmoor, Shiford, Rushy, Grafton, Buscot, and finally St John's near Lechlade, 150 miles by river from the sea.

Where Argosies From the Ends of the Earth Unload

THE barges made their way leisurely along at the pace of a straining horse along the tow-path, but increasing and ever increasing bustle marked the tidal reaches, where argosies from the ends of the earth emptied their holds into the barges or on to the wharves that lined the river. The discovery of the New World and trade with the East created a huge fleet of merchantmen, and mile-long forests of spars marked the meandering course of the river below London Bridge. London's river became a shipping centre for Europe, whose merchants used it for the

transfer of goods from ship to ship, thus adding to London's wealth and making her the financial centre of the world. And then came steam, which sent soaring the quantity of traffic on the stream and the number of traders dwelling along its banks.

The Thames and its tributaries have served another vital need of the millions it has attracted to its banks. Wealth and work depend on health: It has made possible one of the greatest drainage systems in the world and has been made one of the biggest fountains of water for human needs. The rainfall of its basin is 27 inches a year, and the average discharge of its waters at Kingston is 1250 millions of gallons a day, never dropping below 350 million gallons in the driest summer. The Severn, with a larger basin and a 40-inch rainfall, falls to 100 millions of gallons. The chalk hills give the Thames this wealth of water, and exceedingly pure water at that. At Hampton, Littleton, Staines, Chingford, and elsewhere the few impurities are removed and 200 million gallons are supplied every day to London.

But it is the beauty of Nature along its banks that has endeared the Thames to all who have seen it. It is the great pleasure dream of the world. Artists have painted it; poets have sung of it. Cliveden Woods, Goring, Pangbourne, Bourne End, the view from Richmond Hill, the view of Windsor Castle, Boulter's Lock, Twickenham, and Marlow are among the most beautiful scenes in England.