

# FINNEMORE JOHN

PEEPS AT  
MANY LANDS;  
ENGLAND

**John Finnemore**  
**Peeps at Many Lands: England**

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# **John Finnemore Peeps at Many Lands: England**

## **IN LONDON TOWN – I**

London is the greatest city in the world. How easy it is to say that or read it! How very, very hard it is to get the least idea of what it means! We may talk of millions of people, of thousands of streets, of hundreds of thousands of houses, but words will give us little grasp of what London means. And if we go to see for ourselves, we may travel up and down its highways and byways until we are dizzy with the rush of its hurrying crowds, its streams of close-packed vehicles, its rows upon rows of houses, shops, banks, churches, museums, halls, theatres, and begin to think that at last we have seen London. But alas for our fancy! We find that all the time we have only been in one small corner of it, and the great city spreads far and wide around the district we have learned to know, just as a sea spreads around an islet on its broad surface.

When we read or hear of London, we are always coming across the terms West End and East End. West and East of what? Where is the dividing-line? The dividing-place is the City, the

heart of London, the oldest part of the great town. Once the City was a compact little town inside a strong wall which kept out its enemies. It was full of narrow streets, where shops stood thickly together, and over the shops lived the City merchants in their tall houses. The narrow streets and the shops are still there, but the merchants have long since gone to live elsewhere, and the walls have been pulled down.

Now the City is nothing but a business quarter. It is packed with offices, warehouses, banks and public buildings, and it is the busiest part of London by day and the quietest by night. It is a wonderful sight to see the many, many thousands of people who work in the City pour in with the morning and stream out at evening. Every road, every bridge, leading to and from the City is packed with men and women, boys and girls, marching like a huge army, flowing and ebbing like the tides of the sea.

In the centre of the City there is a famous open space where seven streets meet. It is famous for the buildings which surround it, and the traffic which flows through it. All day long an endless stream of omnibuses, cabs, drays, vans, carts, motor-cars, motor-buses, carriages, and every kind of vehicle which runs on wheels, pours by. So great is the crush of traffic that underground passages have now been built for people to cross from side to side, and that is a very good thing, for only the very nimble could dodge their way through the mass of vehicles.

Upon one side of this space there stands a building with blank walls, not very high nor very striking in appearance. But it is the

Bank of England, where the money matters of half the world are dealt with! If we went inside we should find that the Bank is built around a courtyard, into which the windows look. Thus there is no chance for burglars to break in, and besides, the Bank is guarded very carefully, for its cellars are filled with great bars of gold, and its drawers are full of sovereigns and crisp bank-notes.

Upon the other side of the busy space stands the Mansion House, where the Lord Mayor of London lives during his year of office. Here are held gay feasts, and splendid processions often march up to the doors; for if a king or great prince visits London, he is always asked to visit the City, and he goes in state to a fine banquet.

A third great building is the Royal Exchange, adorned with its great pillars, and here the merchants meet, and business matters affecting every corner of the globe are dealt with.

But there are two places which we must glance at before we leave the City, whatever else we miss, and these are the Tower and St. Paul's Cathedral. And first of all we will go to the Tower, for it is the oldest and most famous of all the City's many buildings. Nay, the Tower is more than that: it is one of the famous buildings of the world.

For many hundreds of years the grey old Tower has raised its walls beside the Thames, and in its time it has played many parts. It has been a fortress, a palace, a treasure-house, and a prison. William the Conqueror began it, William Rufus went on with the work, and the latter finished the central keep, the famous White

Tower, the heart of the citadel. For many centuries the Tower was the strongest place in the land, with its thick walls and its deep moat filled with water from the Thames, and the rulers of England took great care to keep it in their own hands.

To-day it is a show-place more than anything else, and everyone is free to visit it, to see the Crown jewels stored there, and to view the splendid collection of weapons and armour. But after all the place itself is the finest thing to see – to wander through the rooms where kings and queens have lived, to stand in the dungeons and prison-chambers where some of the best and noblest of our race have been shut up, and to climb the narrow winding stairs from floor to floor.

Many of the prisoners of the Tower were brought into it by the Traitor's Gate, a great gloomy archway under which the waters of the Thames once flowed. In those days the river was the great highway of London, and when the judges at Westminster had condemned a prisoner to be sent to the Tower, he was carried down the river in a barge and landed at the Traitor's Gate. Many and many a poor prisoner saw his last glimpse of the outer world from the gloomy gate. Before him lay nothing save a dreadful death at the hands of the headsman.

Outside the White Tower there is a garden, where once stood the block where the greatest of the prisoners were beheaded. Outside the Tower is Tower Hill, where those of a lesser rank suffered; we may still see in the Tower a headsman's block whereon heads have been laid and necks offered to the sharp,

heavy axe. As for the names of those who have been executed in the Tower, history is full of them – Lady Jane Grey, Sir Thomas More, Anne Boleyn, Sir Walter Raleigh, Katherine Howard, the Earl of Essex, to name but a few who have suffered there. An earlier tragedy than any of these is the murder of the two little princes, Edward V. and his brother, put to death by command of Richard of Gloucester, Richard Crookback, their wicked uncle who wanted to seize the throne.

From the upper windows of the White Tower we can see the river crowded with ships and steamers and barges, and on a fine day it is a most beautiful sight. But the most striking thing in the view is the Tower Bridge. "This is a new bridge, and it has two great towers rising one on each side, as it seems, to the sky, and the bridge lies across low down between those towers. But when a big ship comes and wants to get up the river under the bridge, what is to be done? The bridge is not high enough! Well, what does happen is this – and I hope that every one of you will see it one day, for it is one of the grandest things in London: a man rings a bell, and the cabs, and carriages, and carts, and people who are on the bridge rush quickly across to the other side, and when the bridge is quite empty, then the man in the tower touches some machinery, and slowly the great bridge, which is like a road, remember, rises up into the air in two pieces, just as you might lift your hands while the elbows rested on your knees without moving, and the beautiful ship passes underneath, and the bridge goes back again quite gently to its place. This bridge has been

called the Gate of London, and it is a good name, for it looks like a giant gate over the river."

## IN LONDON TOWN – II

It is quite easy to find your way to St. Paul's Cathedral, for the splendid dome of the great church springs high above the highest roof of the City, and the gilt cross on its dome glitters in the sun 400 feet above the pavement below.

It is not a very old building, for it was raised after the Great Fire of 1666, the fire which laid the City in ruins and destroyed the old cathedral. It was built by a great architect, Sir Christopher Wren. He lies buried in the cathedral, and over his tomb is a Latin inscription which means, "If thou dost seek my monument, look around thee."

You see the meaning of this and look around, and acknowledge that the noble church is indeed a splendid testimony to the skill of him who built it. As you walk round the place, you find many other monuments to famous men. Nelson lies here and Wellington, our greatest sailor and our greatest soldier, and Dr. Johnson, the famous scholar. Here and there are battle-flags, the colours of famous regiments, decking the walls. Torn by shot and stained with blood, they speak of fierce battles where the men who bore them were in the thickest of the fight, but now they hang in the silence of the great cathedral, mute witnesses of Britain's greatest victories.

The most striking part of the building is the great dome, which springs so high into the air that, viewed from beneath, its top

looks far off, and dusky, and dim. You may climb it by a flight of many, many steps, and walk round it inside by means of a great gallery. This is called the Whispering Gallery, for if you stand at one side of it and whisper softly, the murmur runs round the walls and will reach someone standing on the opposite side, a long distance off!

Next, you may go on up and up until you reach the top of the dome and look out far and wide over London, with the river winding through the huge maze of streets and houses, and the whole spread out at your feet as a bird sees a place on the wing. It is a wonderful sight on a clear day, and on a dull one it is hardly less striking, for the huge forest of smoking chimneys spreads and spreads till it is lost on the horizon, and you think that there is no end to this immense town, and that it is stretching on and on for ever.

Well, now, from the City which way shall we strike, east or west? I think you would soon be tired of the East End, for there is little to see there that is pleasing or beautiful. Nearly all the people who live in the East End are poor, and they live in long rows of mean houses in dirty streets, where the air is close and everything is grimy. There are parts of the East End, of course, where things are better than this, with clean streets and nice houses, but still, there is nothing to attract a visitor like the splendid buildings and the beautiful parks to be seen at the West End of town.

When we speak of parks that brings at once to the mind the

thought of Hyde Park, finest of all London's fine open spaces, so we will go to it from St. Paul's by bus, and our way will be through some of the most famous streets of London. A seat on top of a London bus is a capital place from which to see the street scenes of the great city, and we climb up and, if we are lucky, get a front seat.

Away we roll down Ludgate Hill, across an open space, and up Fleet Street, where it seems that every newspaper in the world must have an office, so thickly are the walls covered by the names of all the well-known papers. Soon we see a monument erected in the roadway. It marks the site of Temple Bar, an old gateway which formed the City boundary to the west. Above the old gateway was a row of spikes, and on these the heads of rebels and traitors used to be displayed.

As soon as we pass Temple Bar we are in the Strand, that mighty London thoroughfare. Its name reminds us that it runs along the river bank, though to-day great buildings hide the river save for peeps down side-streets. At one time the south side of the Strand was lined with the mansions of great noblemen, whose gardens ran down to the water's edge, and the side-streets yet bear the names of the great houses which stood in the neighbourhood.

To our right as we leave Temple Bar rises the splendid pile of the new Law Courts, and on we go between close-packed lines of shops and theatres until we come out into Trafalgar Square, the central point of London. Here is a great open space where fountains quietly play and a lofty column rises, the latter crowned

with a statue of our sailor hero, Nelson. At the upper end of the Square stands the National Art Gallery, where some of the finest pictures in the world may be seen; but we must come another day to look at them, for our bus is still rolling westward.

We get a glimpse at Pall Mall, the region of club-land, and soon enter Piccadilly, one of London's most beautiful and famous streets. We pass the doors of the Royal Academy, and then a pleasant park opens to our left, the Green Park, while on our right runs a continuous line of mansions, shops, and clubs, until the bus pulls up at Hyde Park Corner, and we have reached the great park.

On a fine summer day Hyde Park offers one of the most wonderful scenes in London. A constant stream of splendid carriages, drawn by magnificent horses, pours into the park and moves round and round the Drive and "The Row," with its riders, is even more interesting.

Rotten Row is a long, broad, tan-covered ride, where horsemen and horsewomen trot and canter to and fro. Finer horses and riders are not to be found. On a morning when the Row is fairly full, it is delightful to spend an hour or so, seated on one of the green chairs in shade of an elm or lime, watching the riders. Here comes an old gentleman on a stout cob. They pound steadily past, and now three or four young people mounted on tall, lively horses dash past at a gallop, chatting merrily as they go, and then there is a swift scurry of ponies, as some children dart along, racing each other up to the Corner, where all turn and

come back.

Perhaps in an afternoon you may go in through the great gates at Hyde Park Corner and find the carriages drawn up in lines, and a feeling of excitement and expectation in the air. A clear track is being kept. For whom? For the Queen. She is coming up now from Buckingham Palace to drive in the Park. Suddenly there is a brilliant flash of colour as servants in royal liveries of glowing scarlet come into sight. Hats fly off as the royal carriage passes, drawn by splendid chestnuts, and there is the Queen, bowing and smiling at the people who greet her as she drives into the Park.

## IN LONDON TOWN – III

Now that we have seen the Queen pass by, we will go and look at her home in London. Buckingham Palace is not far from Hyde Park Corner, and when we reach it we see a big, rather dull-looking building, with a courtyard before it, and red-coated soldiers marching up and down on guard. This palace of the King and Queen is, in truth, not very handsome outside, but it is very splendid within, its fine rooms being adorned with the paintings of great artists.

A noble road, called the Mall, leads from the front of Buckingham Palace, and if we follow it we shall come out on a wide, open space laid with gravel, the Horse Guards' Parade. Or if we do not care about walking along the Mall, we can come through St. James's Park, with its pretty piece of ornamental water, where ducks and other water-birds fly about, and watch eagerly for crumbs flung to them by the visitors.

Crossing the Horse Guards' Parade, we go through a small archway into the great street called Whitehall. The archway is watched without by two Life Guards – tall men in shining steel breastplates and helmets, and mounted on tall horses – while others on foot march up and down within.

In Whitehall may be seen the room from which Charles I. stepped out to the scaffold on the day of his execution. It was once the banqueting-hall of a royal palace, and is now a museum,

and anyone may go into it. The scaffold had been built outside the walls, and he stepped through a window to reach it, and there his head was struck off before a great crowd which had gathered in Whitehall.

The broad street is lined with tall buildings, where the business of Government is carried on; and at its foot stand the Houses of Parliament, where laws are made for the nation. This noble range of buildings is crowned by three great towers, two square and one pointed. The pointed one is the Clock Tower, and there, high above our heads, is the great clock with its four faces. It is the largest clock in England; its figures are 2 feet in length; its minute-hand is 16 feet long, and weighs 2cwt. The hour is struck on a great bell called "Big Ben," and when Big Ben booms out over London it tells the people what o'clock it is, and they set their watches and clocks by it.

As we look round, we see at a short distance from us a majestic old church, its walls grey and time-worn. It is Westminster Abbey, the place where our kings and queens have been crowned for a thousand years, and where lie the remains of Britain's famous dead. No sooner do we enter the venerable building than we see on every side monuments and inscriptions to the memory of great men and women – kings, queens, princes, statesmen, famous writers, soldiers, sailors, travellers, all are there – some with a mere line or so of inscription, some with a huge sculptured monument. For many hundreds of years Westminster Abbey has been used as a burial-place, and to name those that lie there and

to tell the story of their lives would be to narrate the history of England.

This noble church is built in the form of a Latin cross, and contains beautiful chapels opening from the main building, the finest of all being the Chapel of Henry VII. at the eastern end of the abbey. In these chapels lie many kings and queens of England, beginning with Edward the Confessor, who founded the abbey, and whose shrine stands in the interesting chapel behind the choir.

Near at hand is the famous Coronation Chair, an old wooden chair, with a large stone let in under its seat. The stone was brought to England by Edward I., who seized it at Scone in Scotland. It is the sacred stone on which all the Scottish kings had been crowned for many centuries, and when Edward placed it in the Coronation Chair he meant it to show that the English king was ruler of Scotland also. And yet it was a Scottish king who first joined the two kingdoms, and not an English one, for James VI. of Scotland became James I. of England, and the two kingdoms were united under the name of Great Britain. Our King, Edward VII., was, of course, the last to be crowned, seated in that famous old chair.

There is one corner of Westminster Abbey which all visit, no matter what other part they may miss, and that is the south transept, which everyone knows as Poets' Corner. Here have been buried some of the most famous writers of our land, and there are monuments to others who lie elsewhere.

From Westminster Abbey we will cross to Westminster Hall, and glance for an instant into the greatest room in Europe. This fine old hall was built by William Rufus, and consists of one huge apartment, and the span of its wooden roof is greater than any other room in Europe not supported by pillars. The hall was built for banquets and festivities, and coronation feasts were held in it for ages. At these feasts a champion, clad in full armour and mounted on a war-horse, would ride into the hall, and challenge anyone to dispute the king's title to the crown.

Westminster Hall was also used for law-courts, and continued to be so used until very recent times, when the courts were moved to the great building in the Strand. Next we will look at Westminster Bridge, the largest and finest of all London bridges. Here we see the broad Thames rolling down to the sea, and have a splendid view of the river-front of the Houses of Parliament. On a summer afternoon the river-front looks very gay, for there is a long terrace beside the Thames, and the members come out to take tea there. They form parties with their friends, and the bright dresses of the ladies, and the movement to and fro, and the laughing groups at the little tables, form a very bright and cheerful scene.

Looking downstream from the bridge, we see on our left hand the Embankment, one of the biggest pieces of work that even London has ever done. Every day the river rises and falls with the tide, and sometimes when there has been much rain a great flood comes down from the country and makes it rise much higher still.

Now, sometimes when the river rose very high it ran into houses and did a great deal of damage, so a great wall was built to keep Father Thames in his right place. "It was a wonderful piece of work. It is difficult to think of the number of cart-loads of solid earth and stone that had to be put down into the water to make a firm foundation, and when that was done the wall had to be built on the top, and made very strong. And after this was finished trees were planted. Thus there was made a splendid walk or drive for miles along the riverside."

# OLD FATHER THAMES – I

Famous above all English rivers is the Thames – "Old Father Thames," as the Londoners used to call it in days when its broad stream was their most familiar high-road. To-day the Londoner uses the motor-bus instead of a Thames wherry; but still the great river rolls through the great city, and on its tide a vast stream of trade flows to and from the capital.

To write the story of the Thames would more than fill this little book, so that we can do no more than glance at a few of the famous places on this famous stream.

Springing in the Cotswolds, the infant Thames, first known as the Isis, runs thirty miles eastwards to gain the meadows around Oxford. Here the river spreads into a beautiful sheet of water at the foot of Christchurch Meadow, and glides gently past "the City of the Dreaming Spires."

In the summer term this stretch of the river presents a gay and busy scene. The rowing-men are out in racing boats, skiffs, canoes, punts, and almost every kind of boat that swims. Along the Christchurch bank are moored the college barges, great gaily-painted structures, whence the rowing-men put off, and where crowds of spectators gather on great race days.

The chief boat-races at Oxford are rowed in the middle of the summer term – the May Eights. Then the colleges struggle with each other for the honour of being "Head of the River," the title

held by the winning eight. The boats do not race side by side, for the river is not wide enough for that; they race in a long line, with an equal distance between each pair of boats. When the starting-gun fires, each crew pulls with all its might to catch the crew ahead. If one boat overlaps another and touches it, a "bump" is made, and the bumped boat has lost its place. Next day – for the races are held day after day for a week – the winning boat goes up one place, and tries to catch the next boat, and so on, until the races are over. Then the boat which has taken or kept the head of the line is hailed as "Head of the River." Here is an account of a bump:

"The Eights: Brilliant blue sky above, glinting blue water beneath. Down across Christchurch meadow troops a butterfly crowd, flaunting brilliant parasols and chattering gaily to the 'flannelled fools' who form the escort. Despite the laughter, it is a solemn occasion, for the college boat that is Head of the River may be going to be bumped this afternoon, and if so, the bump will surely take place in front of the barges. The only question is, before which barge will it happen? When the exciting moment draws near, chatter ceases, and tense stillness holds the crowd in thrall. The relentless pursuers creep on steadily, narrowing the gap between themselves and the first boat, and finally bump it exactly opposite its own barge! A moment's pause. The completeness of the triumph is too impressive to be grasped at once; then pandemonium – pistol-shots, rattles, hoots, yells, shrieks of joy, wildly waving parasols, and groans."

From the river some of the most striking and beautiful pictures of Oxford may be gained. As the stream winds and turns, the pinnacles, spires, and domes of this most lovely city group themselves in ever-changing combinations, and draw the eye until Oxford is lost to view behind the lofty elms and the alders which fringe the stream.

Below Oxford the river runs quietly along between rich meadows which in spring and early summer are carpeted with lovely wild-flowers, past quaint old houses and riverside inns, under straggling and picturesque old bridges, and ripples over fords where heavy cart-horses splash knee-deep through the clear shining stream. Here and there are pleasant villages on the bank, each with its old church, whose graveyard is shaded by great yews and entered by a quaint lych-gate.

Of the larger towns on the Thames, Reading is among the most important. But we shall not speak of the busy Reading of to-day, with its seed-gardens and biscuit factories, but of long-ago Reading, when its great abbey was flourishing, and its Abbot one of the chief men in England.

Once when Henry VIII. was hunting in Windsor Forest, he lost his way, and arrived at the Abbey of Reading about dinner-time. He concealed his rank, and announced that he was one of the King's guard, and, in this character, was invited to the Abbot's table. A sirloin of beef was set on the table, and the hungry King made such play with his knife and fork that the Abbot could not but observe it.

"Ah," said the Abbot, "I would give a hundred pounds could I but feed on beef so heartily as you do. But my stomach is so weak that I can scarce digest a small rabbit or a chicken."

Bluff King Hal laughed and pledged his host in wine, thanked him for the good dinner, then went without giving any hint who he was.

A few weeks later some of the King's men came to the abbey, seized the Abbot, and carried him off to the Tower. Here he was shut up and fed on bread and water, and between this wretched food and his fears of the King's displeasure the poor Abbot had a very hard time.

Then one day a fine sirloin of beef was brought into his cell, and the famished priest leapt to the table and ate like a hungry farmer. In sprang Henry from a private place, where he had been watching his prisoner eat.

"Now, Sir Abbot," cried the King, "down with your hundred pounds, for of a surety I have found your appetite for you." Whereupon the Abbot paid up at once and went home, lighter in purse, but merry at heart to find that the King sought his money and not his head.

## OLD FATHER THAMES – II

Below Reading the Thames becomes "the playground of London." All the summer long its bosom is dotted with boats, and the lawns upon its banks are filled with people who have fled from "town" to rest their eyes on green fields and the shining stretches of cool running water, so delightful after the heat and glare of London.

Many holiday-makers actually live on the river in a house-boat, a broad, flat-bottomed craft upon which a kind of wooden house is built, and moored in the stream. Others traverse the river in a rowing-boat, carrying tents and camping at night in a meadow beside the stream.

Going down-river from Reading, we come to Henley, where the noted regatta is held every year in the first week of July. It is the greatest of all river regattas, and the most famous boat clubs of the world send crews to Henley.

On a fine day of the Henley week the course presents a most striking and brilliant scene. The river is packed from side to side with boats of every size and kind – skiffs, punts, canoes – filled with ladies in pretty summer dresses and men in cool white flannels. The sides of the river are lined with house-boats, each bearing a gaily-dressed crowd and decked with beautiful flowers. Pennons and flags and streamers flutter in the sunshine, and the wonderful mingling of bright colours in the moving crowds on

land and water presents one of the gayest and prettiest scenes in the world.

Suddenly a bell rings. Clear the course! A race is about to begin. Now the boats are pulled hastily to the side of the river, where the course is marked off by piles and booms. It seems impossible for the river full of craft to pack itself away along the sides, but in some fashion or other it is managed – skiffs, canoes, and punts all wedged together like sardines in a tin.

Then a shout rings along the banks – "They're off! they're off!" and all crane their necks to catch the first glimpse of the racing boats. Soon the long slender boats come dashing past, the eight men in each craft pulling with tremendous power, and the little cox crouching in the stern, tiller ropes in hand. Then rises a great outburst of cheers as the friends of the winners hail the victory.

Among the beautiful houses which stand upon the bank of the stream below Henley, there is one ancient and noble hall which forms a striking picture from the river. This is Bisham Abbey, where Queen Elizabeth was once a prisoner during her sister's reign, a house of many stories and legends. One of these stories tells that "the house is haunted by a certain Lady Hoby, who beat her little boy to death because he could not write without blots. She goes about wringing her hands and trying to cleanse them from indelible inkstains. The story has probably some foundation, for a number of copybooks of the age of Elizabeth were discovered behind one of the shutters during some later

alterations, and one of these was deluged in every line with blots. We all know that great severity was exercised by parents with their children at that time; and the story, if not the ghost, may safely be accepted."

On we go, past the lovely wooded cliffs of Cliveden, through the well-known Boulter's Lock, and away downstream, till we see a mighty tower rise high above the river, and know that we are looking on the noble Round Tower which crowns Windsor Castle, the home of English kings. Near the river the castle looks very fine, its irregular pile of buildings rising in a series of rough levels, adorned by turrets, towers, and pinnacles, until the whole is topped and dominated by the mighty Round Tower built by Edward III., the hero of the French wars.

Since the days of the first Norman, Windsor Castle has been a favourite abode of English royalty. Other palaces have been built, to fall into neglect and decay, but Windsor has stood on its hill beside the Thames for more than 800 years, and it has been a royal castle all the time.

Opposite Windsor, most famous of all English palaces, stands Eton, most famous of all English schools. From the well-known North Terrace of Windsor Castle – open to the public from sunrise to sunset – it is possible to obtain a fine view of the great school. "We can look down on the whole of Eton – the church, with its tall spire; the buttresses and pinnacles of the chapel standing up white against an indigo background; the red and blue roofs piled this way and that; and the green playing-

fields, girdled by the swift river."

The Thames is a great playground of the Eton boys. They row on it, and bathe in it. At the great Eton festival, on June 4, there is a procession of boats on the river, when the boys, dressed in quaint costumes, row to a small islet and return to the meadows beside the stream. There are two bathing-places – one, a small backwater, called Cuckoo Weir, where the lower boys bathe. Here is held the swimming trial which a boy must pass before he can go out boating. The other bathing-place, known by the fine title of Athens, is in the main river, and is used by the bigger boys.

A short distance downstream is the historic mead whose name is familiar on every lip. It is a quiet, smooth meadow beside the river, and it is Runnymede, or Runney Mead, where King John signed Magna Charta, and so made a beginning of English freedom. There is now an island in the Thames at that spot called Magna Charta Island, but it is not thought that the Charter was signed there. It is believed that John and the barons met on the mainland, the King riding down from Windsor to meet his offended subjects.

Below Windsor the Thames flows past many well-known riverside towns, and at last meets the tide. The sea is still nearly seventy miles away, but salt water now mingles with the fresh of the brooks and rills which have made up the great river, and a change takes place – the stream of pleasure becomes more and more a stream of busy trade. "Though pleasure-boats are to be seen in quantities any summer evening about Putney;

though market-gardens still border the banks at Fulham, yet the river is for the greater part lined with wharves and piers and embankments. It is no wild thing running loose, but a strong worker full of earnest purpose. It is the great river without which there would have been no London, the river which bears the largest trade the world has ever known."

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