

the river. Tacitus describes London, in the year 61, as celebrated for the number of its merchants and commerce; and an edict of King Ethelred (A.D. 978) refers to the fact that "the Emperor's men, or Easterlings, come with their ships to Billingsgate." "The Easterlings," observes John Timbs in his "Curiosities of London," "were the merchants of the Steelyard, and paid a duty to the port." Fitz-Stephen, in his "Life of St. Thomas à Becket," thus describes the merchandise of London:

"Arabia's gold, Sabæa's spice and incense,
Seythia's keen weapons, and the oil of palms
From Babylon's deep soil; Nile's precious gems;
China's bright shining silks, and Gallic wines;
Norway's warm peltry, and the Russian sables,
All here abound."

Special advantages have been from time to time conferred by different English sovereigns upon foreign traders entering the port of London, whose great guilds long held the commerce of London in their hands. Under an Act of Charles II. the port of London is held to extend as far as the North Foreland. It, however, practically extends only about six and a half miles below London Bridge to Bugsby's Hole, just beyond Blackwall. The actual port reaches to Limehouse, and consists of the Upper Pool, the first bend, or *reach*, of the river from London Bridge to near Wapping and Execution Dock; and the Lower Pool, thence to Cuckold's Point. In the latter space colliers mostly lie in tiers, a fairway of 300 feet being left for shipping and steamers passing up and down. The depth of the river ensures London considerable advantages as a shipping port.

"The congregation of men, ships, and commerce of all nations in the 'Pool,'" writes the author of "Babylon the Great," "the din, the duskiess, the discord of order, activity, and industry, is finer than a bird's-eye view of London from the hills on the north or south, or than the royal gardens, the parks, and the palaces, that first present themselves to a stranger coming from the west. . . . This is indeed Old Father Thames, in the overwhelming wonders of his wealth; and the ships and the warehouses that we see contain the stimulus and the reward of those men who have made England the queen and London the jewel of the world."

Some idea of the immense amount of business done in the Pool may be gathered from the fact that "in one day (September 17, 1849) there arrived in the port 121 ships, navigated by 1,387 seamen, with a registered tonnage of 29,699 tons—106 British, 15 foreign; 52 cargoes from our

colonies, 69 from foreign states—from the inhabitants of the whole circuit of the globe. The day's cargoes included 32,280 packages of sugar from the West Indies, Brazil, the East Indies, Penang, Manilla, and Rotterdam; 317 oxen and calves, and 2,734 sheep, principally from Belgium and Holland; 3,967 quarters of wheat, 13,314 quarters of oats, from Archangel or the Baltic; potatoes from Rotterdam; 1,200 packages of onions from Oporto; 16,000 chests of tea from China; 7,400 packages of coffee, from Ceylon, Brazil, and India; 532 bags of cocoa from Grenada; 1,460 bags of rice from India, and 350 bags of tapioca from Brazil; bacon and pork from Hamburg; and 8,000 packages of butter, and 50,000 cheeses from Holland; 767 packages of eggs (900,000); of wool, 4,458 bales, from the Cape and Australia; 15,000 hides, 100,000 horns, and 3,600 packages of tallow, from South America and India; hoofs of animals, 13 tons from Port Philip, and 140 elephants' teeth from the Cape; 1,250 tons of granite from Guernsey; copper ore from Adelaide, and cork from Spain; 40,000 mats from Archangel, and 400 tons of brimstone from Sicily; cod-liver oil, and 3,800 sealskins from Newfoundland; 110 bales of bark from Africa, and 1,110 casks of oil from the Mediterranean; lard, oil-cake, and turpentine, from America; hemp from Russia, and potash from Canada; 246 bales of rags from Italy; staves for casks, timber for our houses, deals for packing-cases; rosewood, 876 pieces; teak for ships, logwood for dye, lignum vitæ for ships' blocks, and ebony for cabinets; cotton from Bombay, zinc from Stettin; 1,000 bundles of whisks from Trieste, yeast from Rotterdam, and apples from Belgium; of silk, 900 bales from China, finer sorts from Piedmont and Tuscany, and 200 packages from China, Germany, and France; Cashmere shawls from Bombay; wine, 1,800 packages from France and Portugal; rum from the East and West Indies, and scheidam from Holland; nutmegs and cloves from Penang, cinnamon from Ceylon; 840 packages of pepper from Bombay, and 1,790 of ginger from Calcutta; 100 barrels of anchovies from Leghorn, a cargo of pine-apples from Nassau, and 500 fine live turtles; 54 blocks of marble from Leghorn; tobacco from America; 219 packages of treasure—Spanish dollars, Syree silver from China, rupees from Hindostan, and English sovereigns."* Later statistics of the commerce of London will be found in our account of the East and West India Docks.†

* "A Day's Business in the Port of London," by T. Howell.

† See Vol. I., p. 555.