

There are two steamboat piers: the one for the town, and the other in connection with the Arsenal. The London Steamboat Company's boats call at the town pier on their way between London and Gravesend, Southend, and Sheerness. There is also a steam-ferry in connection with railway conveyance from North Woolwich by the Great Eastern Railway. The North Kent Railway, and also the South Eastern Railway, have stations at the Dockyard and Arsenal. The South Eastern Company have also a direct line to London through Greenwich and Deptford. The North Kent line of railway was not opened till 1849, but the Eastern Counties ran a branch to North Woolwich shortly before that date.

Early allusions to the town represent it as being of naval rather than of military importance. Thus Stow speaks of "Woolwich, seated on the Kentish side, low, and not over healthful; but, by reason of its Dock and Storehouses for the Royal Navy, is a place well inhabited, especially by those who have their dependence thereon. And in this dock hath been built the best ships of war, amongst which the *Royal Sovereign*, anno 1637." After describing her "three tire of guns, all of brass; in all, 100 guns," Stow relates that "this royal ship was curiously carved, and gilt with gold; so that when she was in the engagement against the Dutch, they gave her the name of the *Golden Devil*, her guns, being whole cannon, making such havock and slaughter among them."

"The Royal Dockyard at Woolwich," observes Lieutenant Grover, in his "Historical Notes on Woolwich Arsenal," "was commenced early in the reign of Henry VIII.; and Camden, writing (in his 'Britannia,' anno 1695) concerning the arsenals for the Royal Navy in *Kent*, speaks of Woolwich having given birth to the

<i>Harry Grace de Dieu</i>	in 3 ^o	Henry VIII.
<i>Prince Royal</i>	" 8 ^o	Jac. I.
<i>Sovereign Royal</i>	" 13 ^o	Car. I.
<i>Naseby</i> , afterwards <i>The Charles</i>	" 7 ^o	Car. II.
<i>Richard</i> , afterwards <i>The James</i>	" 10 ^o	
<i>St. Andrew</i>	" 22 ^o	

so that men-of-war must have been constructed there at least as early as the year 1512. The '*Henry Grace a Dieu*,' as she was sometimes called, was burnt at Woolwich in 1553. From this dockyard were launched most of the ships celebrated in the victories of Drake and Cavendish, and in the voyages of Hawkins and Frobisher."

Mr. Pepys, as Secretary to the Admiralty, often paid official visits of inspection to Woolwich. As he tells us in his "Diary," under date 11 July, 1662, he "viewed well all the houses and stores there

which lie in very great confusion, for want of storehouses." The public roads about Woolwich appear in Pepys's time to have been somewhat dangerous for travellers, for under date of 19 September, 1662, we read: "To Deptford and Woolwich Yard. At night, after I had eaten a cold pullet, I walked by brave moonshine, with three or four armed to guard me, to Redriffe [Rotherhithe], it being a joy to my heart to think of the condition that I was now in, that people should of themselves provide this for me, unspoke to. I hear this walk is dangerous to walk by night, and much robbery committed there." Again he writes, "30 June, 1664: By water to Woolwich, and walked back from Woolwich to Greenwich all alone; saw a man that had a cudgell in his hand, and though he told me he laboured in the King's yard, and many other good arguments that he is an honest man, yet, God forgive me! I did doubt he might knock me on the head behind with his club. But I got safe home."

What changes have not taken place in this neighbourhood since it first became a favourite summer resort for Londoners two hundred years ago! when Pepys writes in his "Diary": "28 May, 1667. My wife away down with Jane and Mr. Hewer to Woolwich, in order to a little ayre, and to lie there to-night, and so to gather Maydew to-morrow morning, which Mrs. Yarnar hath taught her is the only thing in the world to wash her face with; and I am contented with it;" and when, even ninety years later, the river flowing past was found so enticing to bathers as to necessitate Col. Bedford's order of the 8th April, 1757, "The first cadet that is found swimming in the Thames shall be taken out naked, and put in the guard-room."

"Between the Woolwich of to-day and the Woolwich of sixty years since," observes Mr. T. Miller, in his edition of "Turner and Girtin's Picturesque Views" (1854), "the difference is so great that one is puzzled to discover the point of view from which Girtin drew his picture. We have traversed the ground in all directions, and even taken counsel of that infallible authority, 'the oldest inhabitant;' but after all our trouble are obliged to confess that the question is one on which we are unable to come to any decision. But what matters? the picture is, no doubt, a faithful transcript of one lovely aspect of nature, as it presented itself to our artist's delighted vision; and the blame is not his if it is now altered and defaced by the handiworks of man. Look at this *beau idéal* of a country road, with its Arcadian cart, and quaintly-dressed rustics, and sand-banks, and bushes