

night — in the offices and eating places in Newspaper Land. It is part and parcel of the men themselves, something they think about as their own, as much as their hats or coats, or wives, if they have them.

Fleet Street. Newspapers. You can't separate the two, because they are each other, absolutely. It does not matter from which end you approach it, it strikes you the same either way. Coming to it from the Strand, which continues it westward, or from Ludgate Hill, under the shadow of St. Paul's, you leave ordinary shops and ordinary people in a twinkling, and you find yourself in a new world, a world whose *raison d'être* is news, and the getting of news and the writing of news and the talking of news, and — very seldom — the reading of news.

The men and women who swarm along its pavements — Fleet Street knows naught of "sidewalks" — seem in a curious sort of way to be alike. In dress partly, in speech wholly, and in the homely fashion in which they collect at the corners of the little old lanes that turn off the Street here, there, and everywhere, they show the brotherhood of the trade. Yes, Fleet Street is the "shop" of all who dabble in ink, no matter whether it be daily, weekly, or monthly papers that claim their lives.

Have you a minute or two to spare? Come, walk with me down this old thoroughfare, and let me point out to you some of its ancient pride and quaint nooks and crannies in which hide the journals that sway millions of people every morning and evening of the year. . . .

We are walking east now, leaving behind us the Strand and Trafalgar Square. In the centre of the street is the monument known as the Griffin,

FLEET STREET

By Elliot Blumenfeld

TO every English journalist it is simply "the Street".

"He's one of the best editors in the Street", or "That was one of the greatest stories the Street ever turned out", are remarks that you can hear almost any moment of the day — or



Reprinted from "Darlington's Hand-
books: London and Environs". By
E. C. and E. T. Cook, Simpkin,
Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co.
London, 1909.

and the moment we are past the Griffin we are in Fleet Street. It is not narrow, neither is it broad, just a good medium kind of width. See how the tide of red omnibuses swirls round the monument, great topheavy lobsters they are.

Here, on our left, is Fetter Lane, crowded with carts and delivery vans. But see, we are in the newspaper territory already. Glance up at the windows of the buildings—did you know that there were so many papers in existence before? You will realize that the Street exists not only for the great metropolitan papers, but for the journals of Sheffield, and York and Bir-

mingham and Cardiff, and all over the kingdom. And not only the kingdom. The big gold lettering on that board up there—the "Times of India". The Street has its hand on India's pulse too, you know.

As we go on, the names on the windows and the buildings become so numerous that we must stop and take a good look at them. Papers from Chicago and Bombay hustle each other for space on the walls; here the Melbourne "Argus" breathes defiance at rivals across the way; high up near the roof of that grey stone building the offices of Edinburgh sheets and papers from far away South Africa ad-

vertise themselves to the riders atop the buses, and an enormous sign stretching along beside us tells where a great news agency makes its home.

And so it continues all along the Street. There is hardly a newspaper written in the English language and few in any other that do not have their London offices here in the heart of old London. Now we begin to see the names of the London papers themselves.

On the right, where Whitefriar's turns down to Father Thames, is the office of the Liberal twins, the "Daily News" in the morning and the "Star" in the evening, with the rows of vans waiting, noisily impatient, for the fourth edition of the evening paper that has the winners of the races at Windsor or Kempton Park. It is past five o'clock, and the buses going west along the Strand to Charing Cross are packed, and those bound for the City, financial London, have seats aplenty.

On the other side of the street Chancery Lane sneaks away toward High Holborn; what ghosts prowl along its narrow paths? It is old, very old. Here is a name that you must know, the "Daily Chronicle", which by means of an elaborate signboard lets the passerby know that it is very much at home. Right opposite is Shoe Lane, and if we have a minute we can stroll up there. On the right, giving a suspicion of size hidden by black and gloomy buildings that seem to bend over and meet at the top, is the "Daily Express": the lane, which is even more narrow than the others farther up the Street, is impassable at the moment because of the lorries loaded with paper standing outside the office. The rolls are being lifted off the lorries into the building by chains, and the echo of clank and clash resounds along the lane.

A step more, and the home of the "Evening Standard" and the "Daily Sketch" is before us, neat, clean; here again the rows of vans are whirling up to the doors, receiving their loads and dashing away to Chelsea and Hampstead and the suburbs that want their evening papers. At the end of the lane busy, shoppy Holborn — rather like Broadway — hums its song, but we have nothing to do with Holborn. We shall turn back and get to the Street again, for there is more to see. As we reach the traffic, turn your head to the right, up street, and take proper notice of that imposing stolid building next to the branch offices of the "Daily Mail". It is the "Daily Telegraph", staunch Conservative, unsensational, thoroughgoing, and much respected.

We are at the end of the Street now, where it broadens into Ludgate Circus. You will notice that a number of the big papers we have not seen yet. They are not far off. The stately "Times" is just round the corner in Queen Victoria Street, the "Daily Mail" and "Evening News" live a little nearer the river, with a whole family of Sunday papers and the "Westminster Gazette"; there is only one that is really out of the family circle. But it is as close to Fleet Street as Times Square is to Herald Square. The "Morning Post" stands at the corner of the Strand and Aldwych, in respectable solitude well becoming its ancient dignity.

Very long ago the Fleet River used to flow along the course the Street takes now, though not keeping so strictly straight. One of the oldest and most charming things about this neighborhood is the Temple. You can step out of Fleet Street and drop back in history a sheer volume. In the Temple grounds the lawyers live,

and have lived for years, and Dickens knew them as we know them today. There is still the sign of the Lamb, the badge of the Knights Templars, on all the old buildings, and the chapel in which Shakespeare read "Twelfth Night" to Queen Elizabeth still stands and catches the shadows from the trees along King's Bench Walk, where of old the judges promenaded.

The restaurants in the Street are worthy of mention, because all the people who work in the Street have their midday and early morning meals there. The Cheshire Cheese, famous all the world over; the Falstaff, which gives you beef done as only London can; Anderton's Hotel, where in the hot summer they serve a most excellent salmon salad; the renowned Ye Olde Cocke, in which some of the most famous pieces of literature have been written; and many more besides.

They are filled all day with men who think in terms of ink; men, some of them, who affect high stocks and very long hair, men with faces of understanding and infinite kindliness — they know the story of the Street.

Fleet Street is not like any other street in London, nor indeed like any other street anywhere. Possibly Park Row has some of the same atmosphere, but there is so much else on Park Row that takes away the attention from the newspaper buildings.

I think that the Street affects the men who live in it. They get infected with the spirit of it: it is so big and near, and it seems that all the world is making newspapers when you are in Fleet Street. By day it is winsome and lovable, and its quaintness makes it very dear to those who belong to it. By day also you cannot fail to notice the amazing network of wires that al-



From "London and Environs".

most blackens the sky overhead; by day you see it a busy old mother of a street, chuckling over its children.

But if you would really know what Fleet Street is; if you would catch some of the glamour and the glory that is Fleet Street's very own, you must pay her a visit by night. For then she is working. In the day she is only getting ready for the battle, but at night those grey old buildings spring to life and the work begins. The Street itself is deserted; an occasional taxicab and a bus every ten min-

utes, that is all; there is a silence and a stillness that suggests Power.

And at eleven o'clock, when the first editions of the papers go to press, if you stand quiet on the pavement, you will hear a rumbling that grows and grows until it is a swelling roar; the very Street trembles as it gives birth to the millions of white sheets that are the Street's children. To those who love the game and the giant presses, it seems that the roar is but the echo of the thudding of men's hearts, the men who are Fleet Street.