

THAME ISIS by JOHN TAYLOR, 1632

from "[Where Thames Smooth Waters Glide](#)"

John Taylor, 'the Water Poet', published this in 1632. Significantly it is amongst the earliest guides to the River.

Note that he considers the river to be the ISIS until it is joined by the THAME after which he calls it THAMES.

If your interest is the river itself you may wish to skip over the more florid sections. He examines the river twice – the first in general, and then later in particular noting the problems.

Where I have been uncertain of a word I have marked it thus. Hover over it to see what the problem was. I have modernise most spellings.

Taylor's was a much faster, shallower, river – much more as nature produced it! The following quotations from Fred Thackeray (1914) are very relevant:

And here I will remark that, in reading old descriptions of the Thames, it is necessary always to picture it to your imagination entirely divested of the whole of the present lock cuts.

Up to nearly the middle of the seventeenth century not one of these existed; you had perforce to navigate along all those long circuitous weir streams which you are now spared by the locks.

The whole River was so different in detail. ...

(Again I exhort you that you dismiss from your mind all the pound locks and their cuts, if you would bring home to your imagination the River Taylor knew and all its risks and difficulties.)

[TITLE PAGE](#)

[DEDICATIONS](#) – *skip this unless you have a real interest!*

[THAME ISIS](#) – *The first general look at the river. Persevere! It soon becomes more interesting.*

[SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS](#) – *How good the river is – but then it has its problems*

[THE RIVERS' WRONGS](#) – *Problems from Oxford to Wallingford*

[MONGEWELL SPRING](#) – *Highly entertaining, over the top description!*

[THE RIVERS' WRONGS CONTINUED](#) – *from Cleeve to Staines*

[CONCLUSION](#) – *He likes the Dutch (sometimes)*

THAME ISIS

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE TWO FAMOUS RIVERS OF THAME AND ISIS

who being conjoined or combined together, are called Thamisis, or Thames.

With all the Flats, Shores, Shelves, Sands, Weirs, Stops, Rivers, Brooks, Bournes, Streames, Rills, Riverlets, Streamlets, Creeks, and whatsoever helps the said Rivers flow, from their springs, or heads, to their falls into the Ocean.

As also a discovery of the hindrances which impeach the passage of Boats and Barges betwixt the famous University of Oxford, and City of London.

DEDICATIONS

TO The Right Honourable Lords, THOMAS Earle of Arundell and Surrey, Earle Marshall of England: EDWARD Lord Viscount Wimbledon: Henry Lord Viscount Fawlkland: and Sir Thomas Edmonds, Knight, Treasurer of the Kings Household: Lords of his Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council, and Commissioners for the Navigation and fishing of the famous Rivers of Thames and Medway.

*Right Noble Lords, with sorrow I beheld,
That which to write my duty hath compelled,
And (from my pen) the Thames flowed to the press,
From thence it ebbs to you to find redress.
My Honourable Lord of Dorchester,
He truly noted in particular,
Dame Isis' wrongs, and Thames' great injuries,
For they were sad perspectives to his eyes,
And had his Lordship lived his meaning was
To make the River passable, to pass.
For then with noble care and diligence
He viewed the helps, and the impediments,
Which aid, or hinder passage up and down,
'Twixt Oxford City, and brave Windsor town;
Yet as I sometimes rowed and sometimes stared,
I viewed where well, where ill the way appeared;*

*And here I have described the way we went,
Commixing truth with honest merriment,
My thread-bare wit a mad wool gathering goes,
To shew the things in verse I saw in prose;
And (Honourable Persons) I humbly crave,
My artless lines may your acceptance have,
Wishing each fault removed (which stands unfit)
As soon as you can read what I have writ,
Desiring God to give you high content
Here, and here after glory permanent.*

*Humbly devoted with his best endeavours
to all your Honourable personages,
JOHN TAYLOR.*

TO The memory of the truly Noble deceased DUDLEY CARLETON, Lord Viscount Dorchester, principal Secretary of State to his Majesty of GREAT BRITAIN.

*IF He be blest that is of Noble blood,
And being made great, is both great and good,
Who is a Christian every way complete,
Who holds it better to be good than great,
Whose life was guided with good Conscience,
Whose end was saving faith and penitence,
These blessings Noble Dorchester were thine,
And these have made thee Immortal and divine.*

To any Body.

*I That ne'er tasted the Castalian fount,
Or came in ken of the Thessalian Mount;
I that could ne'er attaine to wet my lips,
With Tempes liquor, or sweet Aga pps,
Who never yet have so much favour won,
To purchase one carrouse from Helicon,
Who with good Poets dare compare no way
But one, which is in being poor as they;
And having never seen the Muses' hill,
Am plentifully stored with want of skill,
Then Fount, or Mount, nor sacred trebl trine,
Are no assistants in this worke of mine:
But ancient Isis current crystal spring
Inspires my brain, and I her praises sing,
And Thame with Isis joins his pearly streams,
Whose combination are my ample themes;
Though (for the most part) in the tracts I tread,
Of learnéd Camden, Speed, and Hollinshead,
And Drayton's painfull Polyolbyon,
Whose fame shall live, despite oblivion,
These are the guides I follow, with pretence
T'abbreviate and extract their Quintessence;
Nor can it be to them disparagement,
That I come after in the ways they went,
For they of former writers followers be,
I follow them, and some may follow me;
And man to man a Presidence is made
In Art or Science, mystery or Trade,
As they before these Rivers bounds did show,
Here I come after with my Pen and row.*

THAME ISIS

*Our patron Phoebus, whose sweet influence,
 Doth quicken all our reason, life and sense,
 'Tis he makes grass to grow, and Rivers spring
 He makes both my songs, subject, and me sing
 His beams the waters do extenuate
 To vapours, and those vapours elevate
 Into the middle Region, where they tumble,
 And melt, and then descend and are made humble,
 Moistening the face of many a spacious hill,
 Where soaking deep the hollow vaults they fill,
 Where into Rivers they again break out,
 So nature in a circle runs about.
 Large Downs do treasure up great store of rain,
 Whose bowels vent it in the vales again:
 No place in England could a treasure keep,
 Thames to maintain, but Coteswold (queen of sheep)
 In Gloucestershire (my dearest mother earth)
 From whose fair City I derive my birth,
 Are Coteswold hills, and in the farthest cliff
 Of all those hills of Isis head is chief:
 Scholars from Gloucester that to Oxford ride
 The truth of my assertion oft have tried;
 On their right hand near Cubberley they pass,
 Two Wells as sweet as milk, as clear as glass,
 Whence Isis first doth pedigree derive,
 Those two are able there two mills to drive.
 At Burton on the water, south from Stow
 Upon the Wold, great veins of waters flow
 To Burford, and to Witney, and along
 Till they make meadows large, and Isis strong.
 The famous River Isis hath her spring
 Near Tetbury, and down along doth bring
 As hand-maids to attend her progress, Churne,
 Colne, Windrush, Evenlode, Leech, whose windings turn,
 And Meads, and Pastures trims, bedecks, and dresses,
 Like an invaluable chain of ESSES.
 After relief of many a Duck and Goose,
 At Saint John's bridge they make their rendezvous,
 And there like robbers crossing London way,
 Bid many a bare-foot Welshman wade or stay.
 Close under Oxford one of England's eyes,
 Chief of the chiefest Universities,
 From Banbury desirous to add knowledge
 To zeal, and to be taught in Magdalen College,
 The River Charwell doth to Isis run,
 And bears her company to Abingdon,
 Whilst very near that town on Berkshire side,
 The River Ock doth into Isis glide;
 These fountains and fish-breeding Riverlets,
 (The Countries nurses, nourishers, and teats,)
 Attend Dame Isis down to Dorchester,
 Near which her lovely Tame doth meet with her,
 There Tame his Isis doth embrace and kiss,
 Both joined in one, called Tame or Tame Isis,
 Isis like Salmacis becomes with Tame
 Hermaphrodite in nature and in name.
 Tame doth derive his Spring or Pedigree
 Near Mesworth in the vale of Aylsbury,
 From whence he many miles with strange meanders,
 To find his lovely Isis slowly wanders,*

*Through fertile lands a quiet course he keeps,
 'Till Southward under Whately bridge he creeps,
 And (like a Pilgrim) travels all alone,
 No Brook or River waiting him upon,
 Onely three nameless Riverlets and two springs,
 Which very privately their tribute brings,
 Bewailing Isis' absence, and his fate,
 Poor Thame all heavy and disconsolate,
 Unnavigable, scorned, despised, disgraced,
 Having in vain so many paces paced;
 Despairing and quite desperate with these harms,
 He hurls himself unwares in Isis arms;
 Nor closer can the bark be to the tree,
 Than their enfoldings and embracings be;
 They rise and fall together, and they are
 In want and plenty to have equal share;
 Sad Thame with Isis will be both one river,
 'Till in the Ocean they their names deliver.
 At Wallingford and Pangbourne, two small rivers,
 Their homages to Thamisis instils.
 The more the river runs, the more 'tis spreading,
 'Till in its course it falls as low as Reading,
 There Kennet kindly comes with force and source,
 To aid and help Thamisis in their course.
 The head of Kennet is near Ramsbury,
 Passing to Hungerford by Newbury.
 The river Enborne out of Hampshire flies,
 To Kennet with some nameless small supplies
 Of peloric rills, which passing here and there,
 Who to repeat, tedious and needless were.
 To Sunning and by Bisham Thames descends
 To Marlow (called great) from whence it wends;
 Whereas a little rill from Wickham town,
 To wait upon the Thames comes gliding down;
 Then pleasantly the river takes free way
 To Topley hills, by Maidenhead and Bray,
 'Till it to Windsor and to Staines doth win,
 And there the river Colne comes gliding in:
 Colne hath its head or spring in Hertfordshire,
 At Abbots Langley, or else very near,
 With some small petty rills and riverlets,
 By Colbrooke unto Staines and Thames it gets,
 The river Wey, with divers nameless springs
 Near Chertsey, unto Thames their service brings.
 Wey (beyond Guildford) helped with creeks and crooks,
 At last at Oatlands towards Sunbury looks,
 And there a little rill, (scarce worth a line)
 In Middlesex doth with the Thames combine.
 Near Rygate town the river Mole is found,
 Bearing its course, runs (Mole-like) under ground;
 But rising up by Notbury again,
 At Molsey it the Thames doth entertain.
 From Ewell town the river Brent makes haste,
 Who by the Thames is lovingly embraced:
 Next which is Chiswick town, and Hammersmith,
 It entertaines a rill, or little frith,
 And after that below, near Wandsworth mill,
 Comes in another brook or nameless rill;
 Thus I the river bring; and it brings me
 From their first springs to London bridge you see.
 Now from the bridge below descend I must,
 Till Thames itself doth in the Ocean thrust,
 And if my pains to good men prove a pleasure,*

*My gain's beyond my merit, beyond measure,
 Of Watermen, men scarce can find a Slower,
 Yet hey, to Gravesend hoe and somewhat lower.
 Brave London Bridge claims right pre-eminence
 For strength, and Architect's magnificence,
 To be true None-such, for no eye beheld
 A bridge which it each way hath paralleled.
 The arches (Tame and Isis) shady bowers,
 Through which both East and West in twice twelve hours
 Twice Neptune greets it flowing from the Main,
 And twice the river sends it back again,
 And as the floods or ebbs increase or falls,
 They through the arches murmur Madrigals,
 Whilst th' Eddies divers ways doth turn and trace,
 Thame doth with Isis dance the wild goose chase,
 From this rare matchless piece of workmanship,
 I with the tide of Ebb must quickly slip,
 And down into the River Lea I hie,
 That parts Mid-saxon from East Saxony.
 Which river falls from Ware to Walthamstow,
 And down by Layton unto Stratford Bow,
 Some call it Lea, but Camden calls it Stowre,
 And near Blackwall it in the Thames doth pour,
 Next Rodeing is (a Brook or river small)
 Which Ford from Barking into Thames doth fall.
 From Havering, Burntwood and from Ockington,
 Three little Rills into the Thames do run,
 They're nameless, or scarce worth the nomination.
 And so on Essex side I end my station.
 And now I'll cross into the County Kent
 To note what rivers from her bound are sent,
 To wait upon the mighty big swollen Thames,
 Who now is grown the Prince of Britain's streams.
 By Bromley glides the river Ravensbourne
 To Deptford down with many a wandering turn,
 The river Darrent is the next and last,
 Which down by Dartford into Thames is cast.
 And thus from Gloucestershire near Tetbury
 And Buckinghamshire close by Aylsbury,
 I have brought Isis and her partner Thame
 With twenty seven helps losing each their name,
 Who spend themselves to make the Thames grow great,
 'Till (below Lee) it lose both name and seat,*

SOME GENERAL THOUGHTS

*Through many Countries as these waters pass,
 They make the Pastures fructify in grass:
 Cattle grow fat, and cheese and butter Cheap,
 Hay in abundance, Corn by stack and heap,
 Beasts breed, and Fish increase, fowles multiply,
 It brings wood, Coal, and Timber plenteously:
 It bears the lame and weak, makes fat the lean,
 And keeps whole towns and countries sweet and clean;
 Wer't not for Thames (as heavens high hand doth bless it)
 We neither could have fish, or fire to dress it,
 The very Brewers would be at a fault,
 And buy their water dearer than their malt,
 And had they malt and water at desire,
 What shift (á God's name) would they make for fire?
 There's many a Seaman, many a Navigator,
 Watermen, fishers, bargemen on this water,*

*Themselves and families beyond compare,
 In number more than hundred thousands are,
 Who do their Prince and Country often serve,
 And wer't not for this river might go starve;
 And for the good to England it hath done,
 Shall it to spoil and ruin be let run?
 Shall private persons for their gainfull use,
 Engross the water and the land abuse,
 Shall that which God and nature gives us free,
 For use and profit in community,
 Be barred from men, and dammed up as in Thames,
 (A shameless avarice surpassing shames;)
 I speak not of the rivers bounds below,
 Whereas the tides perpetual ebb and flow,
 Nor is the river wanting much repair,
 Within the bounds of London's honoured Mayor,
 Which limits all are clear from stakes and piles,
 Beyond Staines bridge (that's more than forty miles)*

THE RIVERS' WRONGS

*But I (from Oxford) down to Staines will slide,
 And tell the rivers' wrongs which I espied,
 Not doubting but good minds their powers will lend,
 T'endeavour these abuses to amend:
 Therefore I pray the Readers to dispense,
 And pardon my abrupt intelligence.*

*From Oxford two miles Iffley distant is,
 And there a new turnpike doth stand amiss,
 Another stands at Sandford, below that,
 Weeds, shelves, and shoals all waterless and flat;
 At Nuneham lock there's placed a fishing weir,
 A gravel hill too high, scarce water there;
 At Abingdon the shoals are worse and worse,
 That Swift ditch seems to be the better course,
 Below which town near Sutton there are left
 Piles that almost our Barge's bottom cleft;
 Then Sutton locks are great impediments,
 The waters fall with such great violence,
 Thence down to Culham, stream runs quick and quicker
 Yet we rubbed twice aground for want of liquor.
 The Weir of Carpenter's sans fault I think,
 But yet near Wittenham town a tree did sink,
 Whereas by fortune we our Barge did hit,
 And by misfortune there a board was split;
 At Clifton there are rocks, and sands, and flats,
 Which made us wade, and wet like drowned rats,
 The passage bare, the water often gone,
 And rocks smooth worn, do pave it like free stone.
 From Clifton down to Wallingford we fleet,
 Where (for annoyance) piles are placed unmeet;
 From thence our Oars did down the river draw,
 Until we came unto a Mongewell Spa,
 A Bath, a Spring, a Fountaine, or a Rill,
 That issues from the bowels of a hill,*

OVER THE TOP DESCRIPTION OF MONGEWELL SPRING

*A hill it may be termed, or demi-mountain,
 From out whose entrails springs this new-found fountain,
 Whose water (clear as Crystal, sweet as honey,)
 Cures all diseases (except want of money,)
 It helps the Palsy, Cramp, or Apoplexy,
 Scab scurf, or scald, or dropsy if it vex ye,
 The Plurisy, the Lethargy, Strangury,
 It cures the Cataract, and the Stone assure ye;
 The headache, Megrin, Canker, or the Mumps,
 Mange, Murrians, Meazles, Melancholy dumps,
 It is of virtue, vigor, and of force
 To drive all maladies from man or horse;
 Helped of a Tertian ague I saw one,
 Weak, and not worth the ground he went upon)
 Who drank the water mingled with the clay,
 And presently the Ague ran away;
 It cures an old sore, or a bruised blow;
 It made the deaf to hear, the lame to go;
 One dumb came thither, and straightway disputed,
 And on the trees are crutches executed;
 To heal green wounds it hath such Sovereign power,
 It cured a broken pate in half an hour,
 Which sconce was cracked on purpose to th'intent,
 To try the vertue of the Element.
 If any man imagine I do lie,
 Let him go thither, break his pate and try.
 Some say cracked maidenheads are there new soldered,
 I'm sure the hill with beggars is embroidered,
 And all those beggars are with little cost,
 With lice and scabs embroidered and embossed;
 And as it were the Well of Aristotle,
 The water is far fetched in many a bottle,
 The clay mixed with the liquor kills the Corns,
 Ah could it cure some Cuckolds of their horns,
 It would have patients out of every climate,
 More than my patience could endure to rime at,
 And had it but the virtue to surcease
 Some clamorous tongues, and make them hold their peace
 Thousands of husbands would their wives send thither;
 That they might be recovered all together.
 Apothecaries I lament your lots,
 Your medicines now will mould in Gallipots,
 Your drugs with barbarous names unbought will lie,
 And waste and languish in obscurity,
 'Twill beggar all the Quacksalvers outright,
 And all our Mountebanks are undone quite,
 So what's become of me? can any tell?
 Good Reader helpe me out of this strange well;
 For with my pen its praise did mean to touch,
 And it (I fear) hath made me write too much,
 Which if I have, let your constructions be,
 Blame the strange working waters and not me:
 But he that says that I do over-do,
 Let him go thither and he'll do so too;
 Well farewell, Well, well fare thou, still excel,
 Increase in operation, Well farewell.*

THE RIVERS' WRONGS CONTINUED

*Beneath the fountain next is Cleeve lock's fall,
 And near to that a lock men Goring call,*

*But having past the lock at Goring's there,
 At Master Colton's house we had good cheer,
 With hearty welcome, but 'twas for his sake
 That did this hopeful business undertake,
 Yet with our hearty thanks we thank them all,
 That dined us like a solemn festival.
 From thence to Hart's lock downward we descended,
 And next to Whitchurch lock which must be mended,
 Because the waters turn so swift and various,
 And gainst our wills to dangerous courses carry us:
 Next there's a Weir, that if it had its right,
 Should be well Lybbed, or else removed quite;
 Below that Maple Durham lock appears,
 Where stands three faulty and untoward Weirs;
 Then near the bridge of Caversham there is
 One Welbeck's Weir, fit to be moved I wis;
 As past the lock at Caversham we row,
 We found the river very foul below,
 With weeds and hills of mud and gravel choked.
 That with our Oars and staves we thrust and poked.
 Next Breaches Weir near Sunning naught doth lie,
 And Sunning lock the groundsill is too high,
 Besides two Gin-holes that are very bad
 And Sunning bridge much need of mending had;
 Haules Weir doth almost cross the river all,
 Making the passage straight and very small,
 How can that man be counted a good liver
 That for his private use will stop a river?
 Shiplake, or Cottrel's lock stand very near,
 Not from that far is Elmes his fishing weir,
 Whereas the rivers' case is altered well,
 For Master Ployden near that place doth dwell;
 Marsh lock is placed a little above Henley,
 And there the Thames is kept indifferent cleanly,
 And here at Henley once in fifteen years,
 A River stranger in the street appeares,
 Whose cistern in the Woods his wealth doth gather,
 In that long space, and cannot get it rather,
 But gotten out of high-way-floods, and leaves,
 As Dutchmen keep the drops of their house-eaves.
 The cistern fills and then the walls break down,
 And send their stowage unto Henley town,
 Another fifteen years the walls repair,
 And fill the place with rain or thawed air,
 And being so replenished in that space,
 It runs (rub rub) close by the bowling place.
 Near Henley (some three quarters of a mile)
 A little I'll digress and change my style.
 Should I forget the good Judge Whitlock's love,
 Unmannered and ungratefull I should prove,
 It was about the time (as I remember)
 In August, some five days before September)
 We landed near the noble Judge's harbour,
 (With stomachs sharp as razor of a Barber)
 The time was short, we neither toyed nor trifled,
 The Kitchin, Pantry, Pastry straight we rifled;
 The Cellar and the Buttery both we foraged,
 By which brave booty we were much encouraged,
 Sack and good Claret drawn from Tierce and Punchion,
 For one whole day, and two evenings Nunchion;
 Our bread as good as ever baker sifted,
 Our wine (rare wine) as e'er to mouth was lifted,
 And in our business (though we all were hasty)*

*We did surprise an excellent Venison pasty,
 We there did save the labour of inuiters;
 Whole joints of mutton proved us good sheep-biters,
 Our beer was bravely boiled and strongly malted,
 Our Pidgeon Pie was peppered well and salted,
 Most tender Chickens, Pullet, and a Capon,
 We (in our fury) did commit a rape on;
 A mighty scarlet Lobster last we seized,
 And so with these Acchats our minds were eased,
 But that which made our viands taste the better,
 Was welcome, which made each of us a debtor;
 And long may he and his survive and flourish,
 That did poor travellers so kindly nourish,
 These lines are writ in duty to express
 Our love, our duty, and our thankfulness.
 From thence we hied us with the stream and wind,
 And in the Barge at noon we bravely dined,
 And as our meat our grateful minds did move,
 We drank Judge Whitlock's health to show our love.
 Then came we to a lock called Hambledon,
 Whereas the stream a handsome course doth run;
 Next Medenham Weir doth speedy mending lack,
 It puts the Thames, and Thames puts it to wrack,
 And near Frogg-mill two paltry stops there are,
 That in the River take too great a share;
 Newlock at Hurley, and a Weir below,
 Almost a stop, (fit to be cleared I know;)
 Then Temple lock, 'bove Bisham Church there is,
 Beneath which is a Weir somewhat amiss,
 Then Marlow lock is worst I must confess,
 The water is so pinched with shallowness,
 Beneath which is a Weir should be defaced,
 And Cottrel's Weir of Cookham be displaced.
 Next Weir doth to one Holderness belong,
 Which doth the river most injurious wrong,
 Near which a Spring runs from the chalky hills,
 The which (not long ago) did drive two mills,
 The stop 'gainst Taplow Warren much doth spread
 Next Boulter's lock, (a mile from Maidenhead.)
 Thus have I past the locks, now weirs and stops,
 From thence as far as Staines mine Inkhorn drops.
 Above Maidenhead bridge a stop and one beneath,
 Which both to be amended I bequeath;
 Against Bray church, and Bray mill, stand three more,
 Indifferent bad as any were before;
 At the stop at Water Oakley naught doth lie,
 At Ruddles Pool the gravel hill's too high,
 The water turns so short, and runs so quick,
 That oft the Barges there aground do stick;
 Near Boveney Church a dangerous stop is found,
 On which five passengers were lately drowned;
 Below the bridge at Windsor (passing thus)
 Some needless piles stand very perillous:
 Near Eton College is a stop and weir,
 Whose absence well the river may forbear;
 A stop, a weir, a dangerous sunken tree,
 Not far from Datchet Ferry are all three;
 A gravel bed, two stops and stakes beside,
 Against and near old Windsor Church we spied,
 With two stops more we saw near Ankerwyke,
 And near my Lord Mayor's stone we saw the like,
 Besides an ait or Island there we found,
 Hedged far out into the stream to gain more ground:*

*From Staines we past to Lalham gulls, most shallow,
Whereas five Barges fast aground did wallow;
And such a trowling current there did set,
That we were vilely puzzled by to get;
Tumbling 'twixt Middlesex and Surrey land,
We came where Chertsey's crooked bridge doth stand,
Which sure was made all by left-handed men,
The like of it was never in my ken;
Wiw waw to Oakam ward, kim kam, kiwwaw,
That through it men can hardly set or row,
That's the last fault I found that merits note,
And down from thence we merrily did float.*

CONCLUSION

*Thus have I showed Thames wrongs in general,
And wish they may be moved, or mended all;
And who can but with pity here behold
These multitudes of mischiefs manifold?
Shall Thames be barred its course with stops and locks,
With Mills, and hills, with gravel beds, and rocks:
With weirs, and weeds, and forcéd Islands made,
To spoil a public for a private Trade?
Shame fall the doers, and Almighty's blessing
Be heaped upon their heads that seek redressing.
Were such a business to be done in Flanders
Or Holland 'mongst the industrious Netherlanders,
They to deep passages would turn our hills,
To Windmills they would change our watermills.
All helps unto this river they would aid,
And all impediments should be destroyed:
Our vagabonds (the wandering brood of Caine,)
They would enforce those runnagates take pain,
Whereby much profit quickly would accrue,
(For labour robs the hangman of his due.)
In common reason, all men must agree
That if the river were made clean and free,
One Barge, with eight poor men's industrious pains,
Would carry more than forty carts or wains.
And every wain to draw them horses five,
And each two men or boys to guide or drive,
Charge of an hundred horse and 80 men
With eight men's labour would be served then,
Thus men would be employed, and horse preserved,
And all the Country at cheap rates be served.
T'is said the Dutchmen taught us drink and swill,
I'm sure we go beyond them in that skill,
I wish (as we exceed them in what's bad,)
That we some portion of their goodness had:
Then should this worthy work be soon begun,
And with successful expedition done:
Which I despair not of, but humbly plead,
That God his blessings will increase and spread
On them that love this work, and on their heirs,
Their goods and chattels, and on all that's theirs:
I wish them blessed external, and internal,
And in the end with happiness eternal.*