

The Soul of London; A Survey of a Modern City

Ford Madox Ford



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This historic book may have numerous typos and missing text. Purchasers can usually download a free scanned copy of the original book (without typos) from the publisher. Not indexed. Not illustrated. 1905 edition. Excerpt: ... CHAPTER III WORK IN LONDON THE Thames is the oldest, as it is the most majestic of the roads into London, but its character as a road is obscured, justly enough. Along the others we travel to reach our work, our love, to meet our death. Along the Thames those who travel are working always, the passengers it bears leave it at the very gates of London. Gravesend, with its high front of piers characteristic in their dark and rigid architecture of piles, is a place of romance to the sailor who comes to London from the deep waters. It is the signal that, after his ninety days of empty sea and empty sky, he has come very near to his harbours. Sailors speak of the place with the remembrance of old and good times, giving a soft look to the eyes, a soft tone to the voice; they are the look and tone of those who think about old emotions, of pleasure, of impatience, of the times when they said "Only a day more now." The river front_pf Gravesend means that. On the other bank a square, large red hotel faces these pile structures across the broad gray sweep of water and air. It marks the gates of the lowest docks, and here, for the river, psychological London begins. It does not much matter whether the ship turns in there at Tilbury or whether it works up to the docks in Gallions Reach, or to the others in the heart of town itself. Work for them ends there. It is taken up by the red-sailed barges. They tack in their engrossed manner across and across the wide reaches; they pass under the shadow of dull clouds, of rain squalls, under watery sunlight, the arms of aligned cranes, the smoke from factory chimneys. They linger, going about, in front of bluffs covered with gray buildings and black trees; in exposed stretches of water they are covered, right...

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