

mack, and to encrease Hypochondriacal diseases, and so cook'd now, as if it wereto be trans'form'd into a Caudle or Custard.

A curious and exact Relation

Of a Sand-floud, which hath lately overwhelmed a great tract of Land in the County of Suffolks together with an account of the Check in part given to it ; Communicated in an obliging Letter to the Publisher, by that Worthy Gentleman Thomas Wright Esquire, living upon the place, and a sufferer by that Deluge.

SIR, I beg your pardon, that I have not made an earlier return to the Letter, by giving you the account, you required of those prodigious *Sands*, which I have the unhappines to be almost buried in, and by which a considerable part of my small fortune is quite swallow'd up. But I assure you, my silence was not the result of any neglect, but rather of my respects to you, whose employments I know are too great to suffer you often, *vacare nugis*. The truth is, I suspended the giving you any trouble, till I was put into some capacity of answering the whole Letter, as well concerning those few Improvements, this part of the Nation has made in *Agriculture*, as these wonderful *Sands*, which although they inhabit with and upon me, and have not yet exceeded one *Century*, since they first broke prison, I could not without some difficulty trace to their Original. But I now find it to be in a Warren in *Lakenbeath* (a Town belonging to the *Dean and Chapter of Ely*, distant not above 5 miles, and lying *South-west* and by *West* of this place) where some great Sand-hills (whereof there is still a remainder) having the *Superficies*, or sword of the ground (as we call it) broken by the impetuous *South-west* winds, blew upon some of the adjacent grounds ; which being much of the same nature, and having nothing but a thin crust of barren earth to secure its good behaviour, was soon rotted and dissolved by the other Sand, and thereby easily fitted to increase the Mass, and to bear it company in this strange progress.

At the first Eruption thereof (which does not much exceed the memories of some persons still living) I suppose, the whole Magazin of Sand could not cover above 8. or 10 acres of ground, which increas'd into a 1000 acres, before the Sand had travail'd

travailed 4 miles from its first aboad. Indeed it met with this advantage, that till it came into this Town, all the ground, it past over, was almost of as mutinous a nature as it self, and wanted nothing but such a Companion to set it free, and to sollicit it to this new Invasion. All the opposition it met with in its Journy hither, was from one Farm-house, which stood within a mile and a half from its first source. This the Owner at first endeavour'd to have secur'd by force and building of Bulworks against the Assaults thereof; but this wing'd Enemy was not to be so oppos'd: which, after some dispute, the Owner perceiving, did not only flight the former Works, but all his Fences, and what else might obstruct the passage of this unwelcome guest, and in four years effected that by a Compliance and Submission, which could never have been done upon other terms: In which he was so successful, as that there is scarce any footsteps left of this mischievous Enemy.

'Tis between 30 and 40 years, since it first reacht the bounds of this Town; where it continued for 10. or 12 years in the Out-skirts, without doing any considerable mischief to the same. The reason of which I guess to be, that its Current was then *down-hill*, which shelter'd it from those winds, that gave it motion. But that Valley being once past, it went above a mile (*up-hill*) in two months time, and over-ran 200 acres of very good Corn the same year. 'Tis now got into the body of this little Town, where it hath buried and destroy'd divers Tenements and other Houses, and has inforc'd us to preserve the remainder at a greater charge than they are worth. Which doubtless had also perisht, had not my affection to this poor dwelling oblig'd me to preserve it at a greater expence than it was built: Where at last I have given it some Check, though for 4. or 5. years our Attaques on both sides were with so various success, as the Victory remain'd very ambiguous. For, it had so possess'd all our Avenues, as there was no passage to us but over two Walls of 8. or 9. foot high (which incompass'd a small Grove before my house, now almost buried in the Sand;) nay, it was once so near a conquest, as at one end of my house it was possess'd of my Yard, and had blown up to the Eves of most of my out-houses. At the other end it had broke down my Garden-wall, and stopt all passage that way.

But

But during these hard and various skirmishes I observed, that that Wing of Sand, that gave me the assault, began to contract into a much less compass. For by stopping of it 4. or 5. years (what I could) with Furre-hedges, set upon one another, as fast as the Sand levell'd them (which I find to be the best Expedient to hinder its passage, and by which I have raised Sand-banks near 20 yards high) I brought it into the Circuit of about 8. or 10 acres : And then in one year by laying some hundreds of Loads of Muck and good earth upon it, I have again reduced it to *Terra firma*, have clear'd all my Walls, and by the assistance and kindness of my neighbours (who help'd me away with above 1500 loads in one month) cut a passage to my house through the main body thereof.

But the other end of the Town met with a much worse fate, where divers dwellings are buried or overthrown, and our Pastures and Meadows (which were very considerable to so small a Town, both for quantity and quality) over-run and destroy'd : And the branch of the River *Ouse*, upon which we border, (being better known by the name of *Thetford*-or *Brandon*-River, between which two Towns we lye,) for 3 miles together so fill'd with Sand, that now a Vessel with two load weight passeth with as much difficulty as before with 10. But had not the stream interpos'd, to stop its passage into *Norfolk*, doubtless a good part of that Country had ere now been left a desolate Trophy of this Conquering Enemy. For according to the proportion of its increase in these 5 miles, which was from 10. acr. to 15. 0. or 20. 0; in 10 miles more of the same soil it would have been swell'd to a great vastness.

And now, Sir, I have given you the History of our Sands. I shall out of my respects to your design, (which I truly venerate, and should be glad to be subservient to in the meanest capacity) make this poor Essay towards a Discovery of a *Reason* and *Cause* of this strange Accident. Where the first thing observable to me is the quality and situation of the Country, in which this troublesome Guest first took his rise; which lyes *East-Nord-East* of a part of the great Level of the *Fens*, and is thereby fully expos'd to the rage of those Impetuous blasts, we yearly receive out of the opposite quarter : which, I suppose, acquire
more

more than an ordinary vigor by the winds passing through so long a Tract, without any check (which, when it has gone so far in triumph, makes its first assaults with the greater fury.) The other thing, that contributes to it, is, the extream Sandiness of the Soyl, the levity of which, I believe, gave occasion to that Land-story of the *Actions* that use to be brought in *Norfolk* for Grounds blown out of the Owners possession. But this County of *Suffolk* is more friendly in that particular, I having hitherto possessed great quantities of this *Wandering* land, without any scruple; which I should yet be glad to be ridd off without any thing for the keeping, if the Owners would but do me kindness to fetch it away.

As to our *Georgicks*, they are so little the care and study of any Ingenious persons in these parts, that I am asham'd, I must be so brief upon a Subject so much every bodie's concern. The greatest matters that have been done, hath been by *Marling*: For, 50 load of *Marle* to an acre of dry barren liny Heath make (as they say) a very great improvement both for *Corn*, *Turnips*, *Clover-grass*, *Nonsuch* and *Cole-feed*. Of the 3 first, I suppose, I need to say nothing. But of the 2. last, (which are late Experiments) I have received a very good account from some *Norfolk* Gentle-men, one of whom the last year had of 7 acre of Non-such or Hopp-Clover 70 loads of Seed, besides a great crop of good Hay; which was twice as much worth as the best crop of Wheat in this Country. 'Tis sown (as the Common Clover) with Corn, and when it once takes, it will hold 4 times as long in the ground. About a bushel and an half soweth an Acre; and the Seed is now brought to 12 s. the *Comb* (or 4 bushels) which was lately at 40 s. The same Gentleman had the last year 10 *Combs* per acre of Colefeed upon a very dry heath (only improv'd by *Marling*) and was this year in expectation of a much greater crop, when I last saw him. I am, Sir, Your, &c.

Downham Arenarum, in Suffolk, July 6. 1668.