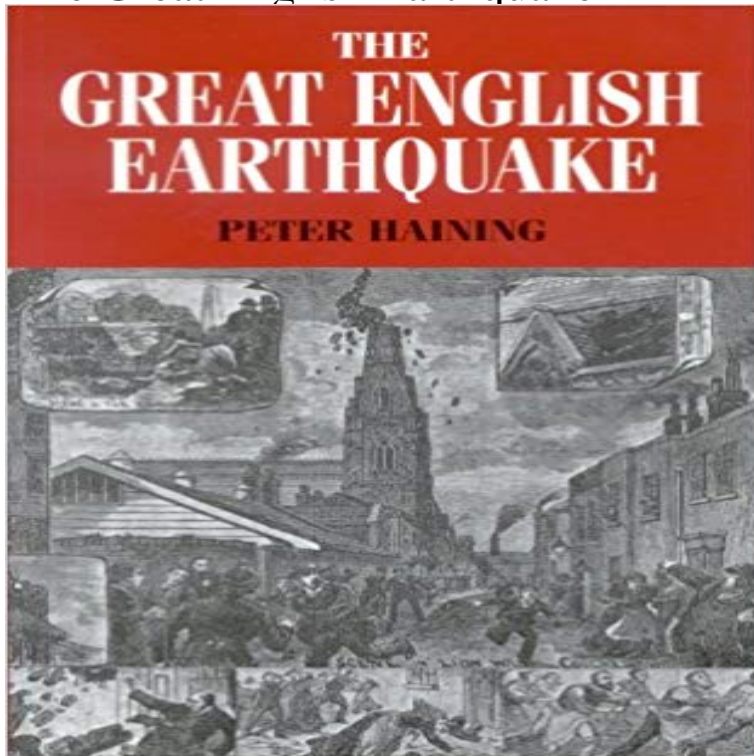


The Great English Earthquake



The event was a stunning blow to Victorian England, the heart of the great British Empire. Consequently, its extent and damage were played down by the authorities and the national press. Based on contemporary reports, personal statements and exhaustive research, this illustrated history is a dramatic and exciting reconstruction of the event. On the morning of 22 April 1884, the unthinkable happened - a major earthquake struck the British Isles. In under a minute almost the entire length and breadth of England had been shaken by a violent tremor which devastated the county of Essex - its epicentre - and caused damage and panic as far north as Altrincham, Cheshire, and to the south was registered across the English Channel in Boulogne and Calais. It was about 9.20 a.m. that a peculiar and alarming noise was suddenly heard, which to some, seemed to be overhead, to others, underground, and which has been variously compared to distant thunder, to the rumbling of a heavy wagon, to the discharge of a volley of Infantry, or to the whirring of a huge flock of birds as they rise from the ground or floor beneath ones feet, and of the swaying to and fro of walls, houses, and all kinds of fixed objects. Doors opened and shut, bells rang, articles tumbled from their shelves, and outdoors, bricks, tiles, chimneys, etc, began to clatter down. The noise seemed loudest indoors, but perhaps the experience of those who were standing still in the open air was yet more alarming, for they could see the solid earth, as well as whatever was upon it, tremble and heave up and down. In some places, the earth even in the Scripture phrase, Opened her mouth. An eyewitness account of the 1884 earthquake.

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