VARIOUS

BYGONE BERKSHIRE

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Preface

The Royal County has many charms for the Antiquary and the Historian, and we trust that "Bygone Berkshire" will not be the least interesting volume of the series which the publisher has so successfully inaugurated. We have attempted to give some glimpses of bygone times and episodes, sketches of the manners and customs of old Berkshire folk, and a few biographical notices of our heroes and learned men. The story of our castles and abbeys shows how many great events in the history of England have been enacted on Berkshire soil, and Windsor, the home of our sovereigns, sheds additional glory on the annals of our ancient county. The editing of this volume has been a task congenial to one who for many years has made Berkshire his home. I desire to express my gratitude to the authors who have so kindly co-operated with me in the preparation of this volume, and I trust that their labours will meet with the approbation of all who reverence antiquity, and love the traditions of the Royal County.

P.H. Ditchfield.

Barkham Rectory,

August, 1896.

Historic Berkshire

By Rev. P.H. Ditchfield, m.a., f.s.a

Berkshire has played an important part in the annals of our country, and been the scene of many stirring events in English history. For eight hundred years it has enjoyed the proud distinction of being the Royal County; Windsor Castle, the ancient home of the kings and queens of England, is within its borders, and it has shared the fortunes and misfortunes of the Royal House. Indeed, its proud distinctive title may be traced to a period more remote than that of the building of the Castle by the Plantagenet Kings; Alfred the Great was born in Berkshire, and there were royal palaces in Saxon times at Farringdon and Old Windsor. Here the Confessor King oft resided. Here the Conqueror hunted the tall stags whom he loved "as though he were their father." Hence from Saxon times to the present day Berkshire has deserved its royal title, and has been pre-eminently the county which kings delight to honour.

The history of Berkshire is indeed the history of England. Successive waves of conquerors passed over our hills and vales, and have left their traces behind them in the names of hamlets, towns, and villages, or in barrows or earthworks. In Celtic

times the greater part of Berkshire was held by the powerful family of the Segontiaci; eastern Berkshire was inhabited by the Bibroci; whilst on the south dwelt the Atrebates, a tribe of the Belgæ, mentioned by Cæsar, who migrated into these parts from Gaul and drove the Celts northward. Silchester, the famous Roman city, the Pompeii of England, was their capital before it was captured by the Roman legions; and the walls, which seem to defy the attacks of time, were built along the Atrebatian earthworks. Very numerous are the remains of these ancient inhabitants of Britain in various parts of the county. There are the old roads and trackways, the most important being the Ridgeway, running along the Ilsley Downs, forming part of the Icknield Street, which connected the east and west of Britain. The road is flanked by fortresses of earth at various places along its course, and barrows mark the burial places of the heroes of their tribes. The chief of these are Letcombe, Uffington, Lowbury, Churn Knob, and Scutchamore Knob. The so-called "King Alfred's Bugle Horn," near Kingston Lisle, a large stone pierced with natural holes, is really a Celtic Memorial. Its trumpet-note can be heard for miles, and was used by the British tribes to summon their scattered bands together when danger threatened. And Wayland Smith's Cave, immortalized by Sir Walter Scott, and supposed to be the burying-place of a Danish chieftain, is probably a British cromlech. In other parts of Berkshire, especially on the high ground between the Thames and Kennett, there are many traces of the ancient inhabitants of

our country.

When the tide of Roman conquest flowed over Britain the old inhabitants of our county soon felt its force and yielded to the storm. Their lands then formed part of the Roman province of Britannia Prima. Instead of incessant tribal wars and rude barbaric manners, the conquerors established peace and civilisation. Silchester became the centre of their rule in this part of the country, and instead of the pit dwellings and rude huts of the natives they erected their stately villas and their forums and bacilicas, the ruins of which, after a burial of many centuries, are now being disinterred. This city lies just beyond the confines of Berkshire, although the Amphitheatre, where Roman gladiators fought, and where, doubtless, as at Rome during the Decian Persecution, Christians were doomed to death, "butchered to make a Roman holiday," is within our borders. Silchester was the centre of our system of Roman roads. Other Roman towns in this district were Spinæ (Speen, near Newbury), Thamesis (probably Streatley), and Bibracte (possibly Wickam Bushes, near Easthampstead). A road ran from Silchester to Pontes (Staines), and another from the same place to Spinæ. Romano-British remains have been found in abundance at Wallingford, Compton, Reading, and other places; and Roman villas discovered at Maidenhead, Hampstead Norris, Frilsham, and elsewhere. With the Romans also came Christianity, and at Silchester have recently been discovered the remains of what is probably the most ancient ecclesiastical building in the country,

the forerunner of the many beautiful churches which adorn our county.

But dark days were in store for our British ancestors, enfeebled by Roman luxury, when the legions were withdrawn to protect the centre of the Empire, and they were left to shift for themselves. The fierce Saxons poured into the land, a happy hunting ground for adventurous warriors, and with fire and sword destroyed the towns and villas which the Romans had left. Calleva, or Silchester, soon fell a prey to the ruthless conquerors, and was burnt to the ground.[1] This was said to have been accomplished by tying burning tow to a swallow's tail. The Celts were driven westward, and found a secure retreat in the fastnesses of Wales and Cornwall, where the British church lived on and waited the advent of better days.

The Saxons hated walled towns, which they regarded as "graves of freedom surrounded by nets," and loved to make clearings in the forests and form agricultural settlements. In no part of England have they left more enduring marks of their presence than in Berkshire. The names of our towns and villages are nearly all Saxon, and mark the spot where their powerful families formed their settlements. We find the Rædingas at Reading, the Wokings at Wokingham, the Ardings at Ardington, the sons of Offa at Uffington, the Farringas at Farringdon, and

[1] So say the Chroniclers; but modern investigators seem to think that the city did not fall a prey to fire and sword, but died a lingering death by the slow process of gradual decay.

scattered all over the county are the *fields* and *hams*, and *steads* and *tons*, which denote a Saxon origin. The name of the county, too, is decidedly Saxon, and is probably derived from *Beorce*, the birch-tree, or from the Berroc wood, which occupied a large part of the *scire* or shire. It formed part of the important kingdom of Wessex, and soon became the battlefield of opposing tribes. Offa, King of Mercia (A.D. 756-796), wrested that portion which borders on the Thames from King Kinewulf, after the battle at Bensington. In the time of Egbert (A.D. 800), Wessex recovered its territory, and established its superiority over the other kingdoms of the Saxon Octarchy, its ruler becoming the first Bretwalda or monarch of England. In the time of Ethelred I., the brother of Alfred the Great, a Berkshire hero, born at Wantage, came the black raven of the Danes, and on the chalk hills many a fierce fight was fought between the old and new invaders. At length, after the Danes had captured Reading, and were moving westward to ravage the whole country, Ethelred and his immortal brother Alfred drew up their Saxon hosts at Æscendune (the Ash-tree Hill), slew the Danish King Bægsceg, and put his yellow-haired warriors to flight. This great battle checked the conquering career of the Danes, who, though they made several incursions into the county, and set on fire Reading and Wallingford, gained no permanent footing in its valleys. The exact site of this victory has been vigorously disputed; it may possibly be identified with Ashdown, near Lambourne, where the white horse cut out on the adjoining hill is supposed to

commemorate the valour of the Saxons, but the best authorities place it at Lowbury.

Ashmole states that when England was united under King Alfred, another division was made, and when the office of High Sheriff, or Vice Comes, was instituted, Berkshire and the adjoining county of Oxford were put under the authority of the same person.

In the war with the Danes during the reign of Ethelred II., Berkshire was again laid waste by fire and sword, and the barbarous invaders burnt Reading, Wallingford, and other places in 1006. They destroyed, too, with ruthless hand the numerous churches and monasteries, which since the conversion of the Saxons to Christianity, had been erected in our towns and hamlets. This conversion was accomplished by the preaching of Berin or Birinus, who, with a company of faithful monks, arrived in Berkshire about 636 A.D. He was received by King Kynegils, Oswald of Northumbria, his son-in-law, and other princes at Churn Knob, and convinced his hearers of the truth of Christianity. The King and his court were baptised at Dorchester, which became an important centre of missionary enterprise. The earliest monastic house was the famous abbey of Abingdon, founded by Heane, its first prior, and nephew of Cissa, Viceroy of Kentwine, who was a great benefactor to the monastery. Here also Heane's sister founded a nunnery dedicated to St. Helen, which was removed to Wytham. The abbey, in spite of being burned by the Danes, became very rich and prosperous. At

Reading, Elfreda founded a nunnery in expiation of the murder of her step-son, and almost every village had its parish church. In the time of the Norman Conquest there were as many as 1,700. At Sonning there was a bishop's palace, but although Leland speaks of the Bishops of Sonning, it was never an episcopal seat.

Soon the peaceful hamlets of Saxon folk were rudely disturbed by the advent of the Norman invaders, and Saxon writers lament over the sadness of the times, when English lands were bestowed upon the followers and favourites of the Conqueror, who reared their mighty strongholds everywhere, "filled with devils and evil men," who plundered the English, confined them in dungeons, and were guilty of every kind of cruelty and crime. At Wallingford, William received the submission of Archbishop Stigand and the principal barons before he marched to London. There arose the strong castle, built by Robert D'Oyly, and others were erected at Windsor, Reading, Newbury, and later at Farringdon, Brightwell, and Donnington. The history of the castles at Wallingford and Windsor will be recorded in this volume; Donnington endured an exciting siege during the Civil Wars; the others were speedily destroyed.

The foundation of the famous Abbey of Reading was the chief event for Berkshire in the reign of Henry I., a magnificent building, one of the richest and most powerful in the kingdom. It was commenced in 1121. A royal charter was granted in 1125 conferring upon it important privileges, and the great Church of the Abbey was consecrated by Archbishop Becket in 1164.

Here the embalmed body of King Henry I. was buried, and subsequently the eldest son of Henry II. found here a last resting-place. Here many stirring events in the annals of English history took place; here Parliaments were held and royal festivals, and many exciting conclaves sat to discuss the disputes of kings and barons and papal legates. To these inviting themes we need not now refer, as the history of the Abbey will be dealt with in a separate chapter.

The wars between Stephen and the Empress Maud devastated the county. As each side gained the supremacy they proceeded to take vengeance on the supporters of the vanquished, and the land was filled with fightings and bloodshed. Brian Fitzcount, the lord of Wallingford Castle, espoused the cause of the Empress, and his fortress afforded her a secure retreat when she fled from Oxford, dressed in white, across the icebound river. Farringdon Castle was captured by Stephen, and completely demolished. Around that Castle and the fortresses of Windsor, Reading, Newbury and Wallingford the war raged. Poor unfortunate prisoners for the sake of ransom were hanged by their feet, and smoked with foul smoke. Some were hanged by their thumbs, and knotted strings were writhed about their heads till they went into the brain, and others were placed in foul dungeons where adders and snakes and toads were crawling. The whole county was reduced to a howling wilderness by this relentless and long-continued war, until at length the country was wearied of fightings and plunderings, and peace was declared.

When John rebelled against his brother, Richard I., he seized Wallingford and Windsor Castles, but they were taken by the barons and bishops in the king's interest, and placed in the hands of the queen dowager. The strength of these two fortresses rendered them important as military stations in the troubles which took place during the latter part of the reign of King John, and also during that of Henry III. Reading was the scene of many stormy meetings of the barons and bishops opposed to the faithless John, and it was at Loddon Bridge that they assembled their forces, and marched on Staines; and on the Isle of Runimede, just beyond our Berkshire borders, they compelled the faithless king to sign the Charter of English liberties.

In 1263 Windsor Castle was besieged and captured by Simon de Montfort; and the battle of Radcot Bridge in the reign of Richard II., a. d. 1389, when Vere, Earl of Oxford was defeated by Henry, then Earl of Derby, was the only engagement which disturbed the comparatively peaceful repose of Berkshire in that period of its history. The unhappy child queen of Richard II., Isabella of Valois, after the dethronement of her husband, attempted to restore his rights by force of arms. Her forces assembled at Sunninghill, and marched to Wallingford and Abingdon; but her efforts were in vain; the power of Henry was too strong for the unhappy child-wife, who fell a prisoner into his hands.

Turning from the records of civil strife, we read of the great rejoicings which took place at Reading on the occasion

of the marriage of John of Gaunt with Blanche of Lancaster, which were solemnized in the great church of the Abbey. The festivities lasted fourteen days, and tilts and tournaments were held daily. During the reign of the Edwards, the trade of the country increased; in the west, the farmers produced their rich fleeces, and the clothiers of Reading, Abingdon, and Newbury plied their looms and became wealthy. Thomas Cole is said to have flourished at Reading in the time of Edward I.; the famous John Winchcombe (otherwise Smalwood) better known as "Jack of Newbury," and Sir Thomas Dolman, were men of note in the sixteenth century.

In the fifteenth century, the plague raged frequently in London, and, in consequence, several parliaments were held at Reading; at one of them, in 1439, a new order of nobility, that of "viscount," was constituted. In the reign of Henry VIII., when many changes stirred the heart of England, we find Wolsey building his memorial chapel at Windsor, of which he was so soon deprived; we see the King hunting in the Forest of Windsor, and being strangely troubled in mind and conscience with regard to the lawfulness of his first marriage with Catharine of Arragon, when he had seen and loved the fairer Ann. Later we see the unhappy divorced Queen taking refuge within our borders at Easthampstead, mourning over the fickleness of men. Then were the fiery times of trial and persecution. According to Fuller, Newbury was one of the first places to receive the doctrines of the Reformation, and there, in 1518, one Christopher the

Shoemaker was burnt at the stake for heresy, and later, in 1566, Julius Palmer and two others suffered in a similar manner. In the meantime, a covetous king and greedy courtiers had set their eyes on the rich monasteries in England; and the noble Abbeys of Reading and Abingdon, and the lesser houses at Bisham, Donnington, Wallingford, and other places, soon met their doom. Hugh Farringdon, the last abbot of Reading, and two of his monks were hung. The last abbot of Abingdon, Rowland de Penthacost, fared better, and was allowed to retire on a pension to the manor-house of Cumnor. The effect of the dissolution of the religious houses was very disastrous. Agriculture languished; wheat became scarce and costly; the cloth trade declined; the poor suffered greatly from the loss of employment which the monasteries formerly afforded, and of the alms which the monks freely bestowed.

No important historical events occurred in the annals of the royal county until the outbreak of the Civil War. The kings and queens of England often resided at Windsor, hunted in the great forest, made royal progresses through the chief towns, and sojourned at the Abbey of Reading, now used as a palace. Edward VI. was received with much state by the Mayor of Reading at Coley Cross in 1552. Queen Mary and her worthless husband were welcomed with much ceremony in 1554, when the mace was presented to her. Elizabeth came nine times to Reading, and had a royal seat appointed for her in the Church of St. Lawrence. The first of the Stuart kings honoured the town

with a visit, and his queen stayed at Caversham House, where a mask was performed for her edification. In 1625, on account of the plague, Charles I. resided at Reading, where the Michaelmas term was kept, and the courts of chancery, king's bench, and common pleas were held in the abbey buildings.

Then followed one of the most disastrous periods of our county's history. In 1642, the High Sheriff of Berkshire refused to obey the king's command; the town of Reading was fortified, and King Charles passed through the town on his way to Oxford, his headquarters. Garrisons for the king were established at Farringdon, Abingdon, Wallingford, Greenwell House, Reading, Newbury, Donnington, and Hungerford. Windsor was held by the Parliamentarians. Many of the people of Reading espoused the cause of the parliament, and left the town because the mayor and other chief men supported the king.

The war in Berkshire began, in 1643, with an attack on Reading by the Roundheads under Major Vavasour. The Royalists attempted to relieve the siege, but were beaten back at Caversham Bridge, and retired to Oxford. The town was captured by the enemy, and the West of England became the seat of war. Then followed the first battle of Newbury, which will be hereafter described. The Royalists were practically beaten, and the gallant Lord Falkland slain. Essex, the leader of the Parliamentarian forces, marched on London, harrassed by Prince Rupert's horse near Aldermaston. Reading was abandoned to the King, and placed under the command of Sir Jacob Astley. In

1644, the war at first raged chiefly in the North of England. Then Reading and Abingdon were captured by Essex, and all Berkshire, except the castles of Donnington and Farringdon, were in his hands. The cause of the Parliament in the West was not so prosperous; the King's plans had been successful. The garrisons of Donnington, Newbury, and Basing had been relieved; but then followed the second battle of Newbury, which ended in the retreat of the Royalists. Then several marches through the county were made, and the royal forces, after going to Bath and Oxford, came again to Donnington, and thence went by Lambourne to Wantage and Farringdon, and finally to Oxford.

The whole of Berkshire was in a deplorable condition; the necessities of war were so great; the supplies needed for the victualling of such large armies were so heavy, that scarcely "a sheep, hen, hog, oats, hay, wheat, or any other thing for man to eat" were left. Soldiers on both sides foraged for supplies, and seized with ruthless hand everything they could find. Peaceful citizens were captured for the sake of ransom, and no goods could be conveyed safely along the roads without their owners paying large sums to the leaders of foraging parties who intercepted them. Numerous skirmishes took place in the campaign of 1645 without much advantage to either side. At last the skill of Fairfax and Cromwell proved too strong for the Royalists, and Bristol and Oxford fell. Donnington Castle, under the gallant Sir John Boys, was the last fortress in Berkshire to yield, and he and his brave soldiers marched out with all the

honours of war, having earned the admiration of both friend and foe.

Thus ended the Civil War in Berkshire. The King, now a prisoner, was allowed to stay at Caversham House with his children; but soon the end came, and the fatal scaffold at Whitehall ended the career of the unhappy monarch. The sequestrators in Berkshire did their work thoroughly; estates of Royalists were duly confiscated; the clergy ejected from their livings; and the Puritan rule fully established.

Shouts of joy welcomed the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. In Reading there were great rejoicings, and a stage was set up in the market-place for the purpose of issuing the royal proclamation, and the King's arms were engraved on the mace. The Revolution of 1688 caused some commotion in Berkshire. In the cellars of Lady Place, at Hurley, many anxious meetings were held, which resulted in the advent of the Prince of Orange. Lord Lovelace, its owner, was one of his principal adherents, and he and his twenty followers were the first to strike a blow for William. It was entirely unsuccessful, and a prison cell at Gloucester rewarded his rashness. At Hungerford, William met the King's commissioners, and then marched on Newbury, some of his forces being also present at Abingdon. Some fighting took place at Hungerford between the Irish troops of King James and the soldiers of William, who were entirely victorious. Reading also was the scene of fighting. The Irish soldiers quartered there threatened to massacre the inhabitants, who requested succour

from William. A body of three hundred men were sent to their relief, and a sharp engagement took place in the market-place, in which the Prince's troops were victorious. The anniversary of the "Reading fight" was celebrated with great rejoicings for many years. There was some slight opposition to the progress of William's troops at Twyford and Maidenhead, but ere long London was reached, and William proclaimed King. There were not a few who sighed after the exiled sovereign, and many who could not reconcile it with their consciences to take the oath of allegiance to the new king. Shottesbrooke Manor-house was the resort of many famous non-jurors, amongst whom were Bishop Kenn, Robert Nelson, Francis Cherry, Dr. Grade, and Henry Dodwell.

From this period the course of our county's history runs smoothly on, and is absorbed in that of England. Each ruined keep and moss-grown pile, each village green and scattered hamlet, has a history all its own, often buried beneath the weight of years, and little heeded by the present race of pilgrims.

Many of these shrines of an elder age it is now our privilege to visit, and to recall the memories of bygone times that cluster round the revered spots of ancient Berkshire. And as we muse upon her glorious past, we shall hold in pious memory the valour of her sons who have writ her name so large in history, and strive to retain untarnished the honour and good name of the Royal County.

Windsor Castle

By Evelyn Ingleby

The word Windsor is doubtless derived from the Anglo-Saxon "windle," a willow, probably referring to the winding course of the Thames, and "ofer," a shore, the "Windesoveres" of Geoffrey Gaimar, the "Winlesoren" of King Edward, the "Windesores" of Domesday, the "Windleshore" of Henry III.

The manor of Clewer, the site of the modern Windsor, consisting of five hides, was the property of Harold, son of Godwin, and, together with his other estates, fell at his death into the hands of William the Conqueror. William granted the manor to one Ralph, the son of Seifride, reserving, however, one-half of a hide on which were some earthworks, which are believed to be as old as the Heptarchy, and on which he built for himself a castle. This was styled, not Clewer Castle, but Windsor Castle, the name of Harold's royal residence, and since then has been intimately associated with English history, having been used alternately by William's descendants as their palace, prison, and burial place.

Edward the Confessor had a "palace" at Windsor, though it is not easy to determine the exact situation.

William Rufus assembled a council at Windsor, and there imprisoned the rebellious Earl of Mowbray for the remaining thirty years of his life.

Henry I. built a chapel, probably on the site now occupied by the Albert Memorial Chapel, formerly known as Wolsey's Tomb-House. Windsor was a favourite summer residence of Henry, and it was here that, in 1121, he married Adelicia of Louvain, the "Fair Maid of Brabant." In 1127, Henry received at Windsor the homage of the nobles of the land, who at the same time swore allegiance to his daughter, the Empress Maud, or Matilda. As was usual on such solemn occasions, the coronation ceremony was repeated.

Windsor does not figure at all in Stephen's disturbed reign, but Henry II. frequently resided there, and in his tenth year expended the sum of 30s. on repairing the kitchen. Fabyan, a chronicler of the time, tells a pathetic story bearing on Henry's domestic troubles. "It is recorded that in a chambere at Wyndsore he caused to be painted an eagle, with four birds, whereof three of them all rased (scratched) the body of the old eagle, and the fourth was scratching at the old eagle's eyes. When the question was asked of him (Henry) what thing that picture should signify? it was answered by him, 'This old eagle,' said he, 'is myself; and these four eagles betoken my four sons, the which cease not to pursue my death, and especially my youngest son, John, which now I love most, shall most especially await and imagine my death.'"

Windsor is closely connected with the granting of Magna Charta by John. Between Old Windsor and Staines is the flat meadow of Runimede, from which the Castle towers are visible. During the conferences which preceded and followed the ratification of this great charter, John went backwards and forwards to Windsor each day. He was at Windsor when he heard of the landing of the Dauphin Louis.

Henry III. greatly improved the Castle. The old hall in the Upper Ward was abandoned for a new and larger one in the Lower Ward, and, in 1272, he roofed the Keep. Part of the cloister still stands as it was then built, and not long ago a portrait of the king, part of the painted decoration, was discovered. On the town side three great towers were built, and on the north was erected a tower on the same site as now stands the Winchester Tower. All the buildings were handsomely decorated with paintings and windows filled with glass. In one of the new towers on the western side was possibly the dungeon connected with a scene in Henry's career, which proved him, for all his piety, a worthy son of his father. The Londoners, headed by their Mayor, Fitz-Thomas, had long resisted Henry's exactions, and when, in 1265, the King was in their power, and Earl Simon de Monfort ruled the land, Fitz-Thomas addressed to his King words in St. Paul's which sank deep into Henry's soul. When the Battle of Evesham delivered his enemies into his hands, Henry summoned the Mayor and chief citizens to Windsor, giving them a safe conduct. They were then thrown into prison, from which

it does not appear that Fitz-Thomas ever emerged, though the others, to the number of forty, were eventually released.

The two eldest sons of Edward I. were born at Windsor, and, though the King himself rarely visited the Castle, Queen Eleanor seems often to have resided here.

In 1312 was born at Windsor one who was to do much for the castle, Edward III. During all his long reign Windsor was the scene of many displays of pomp and vanity, of tournaments, feasts, processions, besides councils, chapters, and great assemblies. The Upper Ward was entirely rebuilt, William of Wykeham – from whom the Winchester Tower derived its name – being the architect. It is said that the words "Hoc fecit Wykeham" were placed upon it, and that the wily prelate translated them to Edward as meaning, not "Wykeham made this," but "This made Wykeham."

Another story is told which points to the want of refined manners and delicate feeling of the Middle Ages. King Edward was conducting his royal prisoners, King John of France and King David of Scotland, round the Lower Ward, when one of them pointed out that the Upper Ward lay on higher ground and commanded a finer view. The King "approved their sayings, adding pleasantly that it should so be, and that he would bring his castle thither, that is to say, enlarge it so far with two other wards, the charges whereof should be borne with their two ransoms," as afterwards happened. The story of King Arthur and the Round Table fired Edward with the idea of founding the institution of

the Garter, and carpenters and masons were soon busy erecting the Round Tower for the Round Table. The table, made of fifty-two oaks, seems to have been in the shape of a horse shoe rather than a perfect circle, so that the attendants could stand in the middle to serve the guests. In this tower assembled the flower of English knighthood – Warwick, celebrated in the French wars, who, when he died of the plague in 1369, left "not behind him his equal;" the young Earl of Salisbury, whose beautiful mother is said to have given rise to the motto of the Order, "Honi soit qui mal y pense;" and many others besides, whose names are well known for their prowess and valour.

It was at Windsor that good Queen Philippa passed away, universally lamented. Froissart touchingly describes her death: – "There fell in England a heavy case and common, howbeit it was right piteous for the King, his children, and all the realm. For the good Queen of England, that so many good deeds had done in her time, and so many knights succoured, and ladies and damsels comforted, and had so largely departed of her goods to her people, and naturally loved always the nation of Hainault, the country where she was born; she fell sick in the Castle of Windsor, the which sickness continued on her so long that there was no remedy but death. And the good lady, when she knew and perceived that there was with her no remedy but death, she desired to speak with the King, her husband. And when he was before her she put out of her bed her right hand, and took the King by his right hand, who was right sorrowful at heart. Then

she said, 'Sir, we have in peace, joy, and great prosperity used all our time together. Sir, now I pray you, at our departing, that ye will grant me three desires.'" Her requests related to her debts, her promises to churches, and to her husband's "sepulture when so ever it shall please God to call you out of this transitory life," beside her in Westminster. "Then the good lady and Queen made on her the sign of the cross, and recommended the King, her husband, to God, and her youngest son, Thomas, who was beside her. And anon after, she yielded up the spirit, the which I believe surely the holy angels received with great joy up to heaven, for in all her life she did neither in thought or deed thing whereby to lese her soul, as far as any creature could know."

Many important scenes in Richard II.'s life are laid in Windsor Castle. Two deputations waited upon him here with a list of their grievances. In 1390 he appointed Geoffrey Chaucer, the poet, to superintend repairs in the chapel. The great dispute between Henry Bolingbroke, the last Knight of the Garter admitted by Edward III., and the Duke of Norfolk, took place at Windsor Castle, where, in the courtyard, King Richard sat on a platform, and gave judgment between the two, sentencing Bolingbroke to ten years' exile, and banishing Norfolk for life. It was at Windsor that Richard bade a last farewell to his child-queen, Isabella of France, then eleven years of age. The scene is touchingly described by a contemporary chronicler, who states that the King and Queen walked hand in hand from the Castle to the Lower Court, and entered the Deanery, passing thence into the chapel.

After chanting a collect, Richard took his Queen into his arms, and kissing her twelve or thirteen times, said sorrowfully: – "Adieu, *ma chère*, until we meet again; I commend me to you." Then the Queen began to weep, saying to the King: – "Alas! my lord, will you leave me here?" The royal pair then partook of comfits and wine in the Deanery, the King kissing his Queen many times and lifting her in his arms. "And by our lady, I never saw so great a lord," continues the chronicler, "make so much of nor show such great affection to a lady as did King Richard to his Queen. Great pity was it that they separated, for never saw they each other more."

After Richard's deposition and death, Isabella was detained by Henry IV., who would have married her to his madcap son, Prince Hal. Eventually, however, she married the Duc d'Orleans, this time choosing a husband much younger than herself.

A conspiracy against Henry IV. came to a head at Windsor, when the Duke of Exeter seized and searched the castle. Henry, however, had had timely warning, and had fled. "He rode to London and made him strong to ride on his enemies," and crushed the rebellion. The Castle during this reign held two unfortunate young prisoners, the Earl of March, whose only fault was his descent from an elder son of Edward III., Henry himself being descended from a younger branch; the other was one of the most unfortunate of the hapless house of Stuart, James Stuart. The king, his father, had sent him to France to complete his education. Henry, however, fearful of an alliance

between France and Scotland, seized the Prince's vessel, and sent James to Windsor, declaring jocularly that England possessed good French teachers. Henry kept his word, and the young prince received a good education. He seems in every respect to have been treated as suited his rank, and was allowed plenty of freedom, sharing in all the festivities of the court. From his tower window he beheld and fell in love with the fair Joanna Beaufort, the king's niece, whom he eventually married. His return to Scotland marked the beginning of a sad and gloomy reign, and he was assassinated by his unruly nobles in 1437, to whom he had made himself odious by trying to curb their power.

In 1416, the Emperor Sigismund was present at the feast of St. George, bringing as an offering the heart of St. George, which remained in the chapel till the Reformation.

Whilst Henry V. was besieging Meaux he heard of the birth of his son. "But when he heard reported the places of his nativity, were it that he, warned by some prophesie, or had some fore-knowledge, or else judged himself of his son's fortune, he said unto the Lord Fitz Hugh, his trusty chamberlain, these words, 'My lord, I, Henry, born at Monmouth, shall small time reign and much get, and Henry, born at Windsor, shall long reign and all lose; but as God will, so be it.'" Although this unfortunate Henry of Windsor spent all his early years at his birthplace, the Castle fell into a very neglected condition. On his marriage with Margaret of Anjou, some necessary repairs were made for her reception, and during his illness, in 1453, Henry lived here.

Edward IV. was the first monarch interred at Windsor, where his little daughter Mary and his son George of Clarence, supposed to have been drowned in a cask of wine, had been buried before him. In 1484, the remains of Henry VI. were removed from Chertsey Abbey, and interred beside those of his rival. In 1789 some workmen came across the lead coffin of Edward IV. On opening it the entire skeleton was found, measuring 6 feet 3½ inches in length. A lock of brown hair taken from the coffin is in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford. A bone of the leg was publicly sold by auction with the museum of a private collector a few years ago. It was understood at the time that the dishonoured relic was taken back to Windsor.

The poet Earl of Surrey was much at Windsor in his early life, and was imprisoned there in 1546. In one of his poems he gives a description of the large green courts, the stately seats, the secret groves, the wild forests, and other delights of the place. He was beheaded in 1547 for denying the king's supremacy in the church.

Queen Jane Seymour was buried at Windsor Castle with much pomp, a life-sized figure of the deceased was upon the pall, with a rich crown of gold upon her head, the hair all loose, a sceptre of gold in her right hand, and adorned with finger-rings and a necklace of gold and precious stones. In his will, Henry VIII. commanded that his body should be laid beside that of his "true and loving wife, Queen Jane."

Queen Elizabeth was very fond of Windsor Castle, and

sometimes remained all the autumn and over Christmas. Between 1569 and 1577, more than £1000 a year was spent on improvements, which, remembering Elizabeth's parsimony, is very surprising. It is said that Elizabeth desired to see "Falstaff in love," and therefore it was that Shakespeare laid the scene of the "Merry Wives" at Windsor. As Elizabeth was very fond of riding, many a gay cavalcade of beautiful ladies and gallant gentlemen must have issued from the gates of Windsor, whilst many a magnificent pageant must have been held, and many must have been the love scenes enacted here, during her long reign.

There are several old descriptions of the Castle at this period still extant, and among the Harleian MSS., is one generally attributed to Stowe. "Upon the north syde and uttar part of whiche (describing the Terrace) lodgings also, betwene the same and the browe or fall of the hill which is very stepe and pitche, is an excellent walk or baye, rennynge all along the sayd buyldyngs and the syd of the castele borne upp and susteyned with arches and boteres of stone and tymber rayled brest highe which is in lengthe 360 paces, and in bredthe 7, of such and excellent grace to the beholders and passers by lyenge open to the syght even afarre off; that the statelynes, pleasure, beautie, and the use thereof semethe to contend one with another which of them should have the superioritie."

In 1642, the Parliamentary army occupied Windsor, and in the following year fifty-five political prisoners were lodged here under the command of Colonel Venn, who despoiled the chapel,

and destroyed the deer in the Great Park. In 1647, Charles I. was a prisoner in the palace of his ancestors. After escaping from Hampton Court, and being confined in Carisbrook, he was brought back to Windsor in close custody of Colonel Whitchcott. The Governor was allowed £20 a day for his expenses. A month later, in January, 1649, he was removed to London. After his execution at Whitehall there ensued much discussion as to his place of burial, Windsor finally being chosen. A hearse, driven by the King's old coachman, and attended by four servants, conveyed the body to Windsor. The Governor refused to allow the use of the Burial Service in the Common Prayer-book. With much difficulty the vault of Henry VIII. and Jane, his wife, was discovered. The Duke of Richmond scratched on a piece of lead, "King Charles, 1648," the year being then reckoned to end on the 25th of March. The following day the King's coffin was brought out when "presently it began to snow, and the snow fell so fast that by the time the corpse came to the west end of the Royal Chapel, the black velvet pall was all white, the colour of innocency, being thick covered with snow." The coffin was placed on two trestles in the vault, and the velvet pall thrown in upon it. "Thus went the White King to his grave in the 48th year of his age," without ceremony or religious service.

In Charles II.'s reign the State apartments were remodelled, the architect being May, who probably only carried out the designs of Sir Christopher Wren. Verrio painted the walls and ceilings, and Gibbons carved the fittings. The £70,000 voted for

a tomb to the memory of Charles I., was probably spent in these new buildings. Samuel Pepys visited Windsor in 1666, and was conducted to "where the late king is buried, and King Henry and my Lady Seymour. This being done to the King's house, and to observe the neatness and contrivance of the house and gates. It is the most romantique castle that is in the world. But Lord! the prospect that is in the balcone that is in the Queen's lodgings, and the terrace and walk, are strange things to consider, being the best in the world, sure; and so, giving a great deal of money to this and that man and woman, we to our tavern and there dined."

James II. lived much at Windsor. His daughter Anne here gave birth to a child, baptised Anne Sophia, who, dying soon after, was buried in Henry VIII.'s vault. James alienated his subjects by committing the fatal error of receiving the Papal Nuncio. It was here also that the Prince of Orange held the consultation which resulted in the flight of James.

In 1700, the Duke of Gloucester, the longest lived of all Anne's nineteen children, died at Windsor, to the great grief of the nation. It was in one of the rooms now forming part of the Royal Library, of this castle that Queen Anne was sitting with the Duchess of Marlborough, when the news of the great victory of Blenheim arrived.

The first and second Georges did not care for Windsor, but it was a favourite residence of George III., but into such dilapidation was it allowed to fall, that in 1778 it was declared uninhabitable. It was therefore resolved to keep what was

standing from falling into ruins, but to build a new lodge on the site of the house which Queen Anne preferred as a residence to the magnificence of the Castle.

The new residence was a long, narrow building with battlements facing north towards the old Castle walls. It was here that Queen Charlotte lived when Fanny Burney, the author of "Evelina," afterwards known as Madame d'Arblay, was her maid-of-honour. According to Miss Burney's diary, the life at Windsor must have furnished anything but the excitement which is supposed to be the necessary element of court life. At eight o'clock, the king and queen attended prayers in the private chapel. In the afternoon, the king and queen and the princesses walked on the terrace. On this terrace, by-the-by, there is a sun-dial, which was the cause of an interesting little incident. The King and the Duke of York were one day walking on the terrace, when the king leant his arms on the sun-dial. A sentry immediately came forward and respectfully, but decidedly, informed the king that it was part of his duty to prevent any person from touching the dial. The king was so charmed, that he commended the soldier to his colonel, and he was shortly afterwards promoted. Every evening there was music in the concert-room, the king being very fond of Handel. In 1788, Miss Burney describes one of the king's attacks. The Prince of Wales and his brother, and several doctors and equerries sat up all night, whilst the king raved up and down an adjoining room, and made occasional excursions in various apartments, addressing

wild accusations of neglect to each and every of his attendants, till at length, Mr. Fairly, one of them, led him gently but forcibly away. During the king's illness, the Prince of Wales and Duke of York lodged in the Castle, and even held formal dinners there, whence it may be deduced that formerly even the royal kitchen in the Castle had fallen into desuetude.

Although the Queen's Lodge was now the chief royal residence, some attention was paid to the restoration of the ancient Castle, and in 1800, James Wyatt built a new staircase, and also restored some apartments looking on to the north terrace, whither the old king was removed during his last attack. On his death, he was laid under the chapel at the east end of St. George's, in the vault which in 1810 had been erected for his daughter Amelia.

During the reigns of George IV. and William IV., James Wyatt's brother, Jeffry Wyatt, whom George IV. knighted and called Wyatville, continued the work of restoration, and gradually nearly all traces of the Castle as it was during the latter part of the eighteenth century disappeared. He raised the Round Tower to its present height, designed the plan for the east and west sides of the Upper Ward, raised the level of all the roofs, filled up the Brick Court with a grand staircase, and the Horn Court with the Waterloo Gallery, united the stables, which were dotted throughout the Town, on Castle Hill, and built the Brunswick Tower, and the York and Lancaster Tower. It is to Wyatville's good taste and fine artistic perceptions that we owe

the fact that Windsor retains its characteristics of a mediæval fortress, and has not been converted into a stiffly symmetrical building, then so much affected.

George IV.'s favourite residence was a lodge near the Long Walk, but two years before his death he removed to the Castle, and his long illness kept him prisoner here till his death. In the same room, later on called the Queen's Drawing-room, exactly seven years later, King William also died.

The chapel of St. George was made a Chapel Royal by Edward III. in 1348. The office of dean was, till the reign of Henry IV., held by a dignitary designated by the name of "custos." John Arundel, in Henry IV.'s reign, being the first to bear the title of "dean." At first the chapel was dedicated to St. Edward, but gradually, owing to its connection with the Order of the Garter, St. George superseded the former patron saint. Later on, Henry VII. had intended to make this chapel the tomb of his race, and the work was actually commenced when the king turned his attention to Westminster. Henry VIII. presented the chapel to Wolsey, and, about 1524, the Cardinal employed Benedetto of Florence to build a sumptuous sarcophagus of black marble, decorated with figures of copper gilt. After his disgrace, the magnificent metalwork lay neglected till the governorships of Colonel Venn and Colonel Whichcott, when these functionaries sold various figures and images as old brass, and realised a very handsome sum by the transaction. In 1805, the marble sarcophagus was removed to St. Paul's, to mark the grave of Lord

Nelson.

In 1686 when James II. was mis-ruling the land, he expended some £700 on repairing the chapel and in solemnizing high mass. In George III.'s reign the chapel was made the Royal Mausoleum, and Princess Amelia was the first to be interred in it. His wife, his sister, and six of his children and grandchildren were buried in the vault before George himself. There is room for forty-nine coffins, and already twenty-one have been placed in it, the Duke of Clarence and Avondale having been the last. Although the Prince Consort is buried at Frogmore, Wolsey's Tomb-house was selected as the site for the magnificent memorial in his honour. The interior of the chapel is lined with marble and mosaic, the walls are covered with reliefs, the windows are of stained glass. The cenotaph stands in front of the magnificent altar, and supports a recumbent statue, a personification of the Christian soldier described by St. Paul, of white marble, the face being a portrait of the Prince. A hound, a portrait of the Prince's favourite dog Eos, sits at his feet. This chapel, built by Henry III., and dedicated to St. Edward, and later on, known as Wolsey's Tomb-House, remains now as the Albert Memorial Chapel, one of the most splendid monuments of the age. In the State Apartments there are many articles interesting on account of antiquity or associations. The Malachite Vase in the Ball Room is the best of its kind in England, the French tapestry is said to be unequalled, the Sévres porcelain is exquisitely delicate and beautiful. Many picture-frames, especially in the ante-room,

are to be found, the work of Grinling Gibbons. Portraits by Vandyck in his best style abound, and there is a splendid series of portraits by Holbein. In the Guard Chamber there is a shield presented by Francis I. to Henry VIII. on the field of the Cloth of Gold, the work of Benvenuto Cellini.

The Library at Windsor is remarkably large and good, William IV. having gathered here the various collections at Kew, Hampton Court, and Kensington, and having brought to light many antiquarian treasures. Amongst these are the three volumes of the collection of drawings of Leonardo de Vinci, brought to England from Holland by Sir Peter Lely, and bought by Charles II., and the series of eighty-seven studies in red chalk and Indian ink of the principal personages of Henry VIII.'s Court by Hans Holbein. The illuminated manuscripts, both European and Oriental are of much historical interest, and amongst them may be mentioned the "Mentz Psalter," of 1457, a copy of Coverdale's Bible of 1535, and the only perfect copy now in existence of Caxton's *Æsop's Fables* of 1484.

In the strong room are many gorgeous treasures of plate and jewels, and a set of golden dinner plates sufficient for a hundred guests, a wine-fountain taken from the Spanish Armada, Tippoo's jewelled peacock and solid gold footstool, in the shape of a tiger's head, and many other curiosities too numerous for mention. Some of the state apartments, especially the library, contain fine mantelpieces and panellings of great age, some going as far back as the sixteenth century.

After the Castle itself, the chief glory of Windsor is the Great Park, the remnant of a tract of 180 miles in circuit, which formed the happy hunting-ground of our mediæval kings. It is joined to the town and Castle by the Long Walk, the noble avenue of elms planted by Charles II. The Park is gently undulating, and dotted here and there with magnificent oaks and beeches, sometimes standing singly, sometimes in thick clumps. Looking from George the Fourth's Gateway to the gilt statue which he erected to "the best of fathers," the beauty of the landscape thrills one with the satisfaction of perfection. The spirit of romance seems to pervade each fairy glade and hill, and visions of days long past arise before us, when lord and ladye fair on fiery steeds rode through the enchanted spot, and paused in their pursuit of the bounding deer, moved by the genius of the place, to whisper words of love. An oak measuring 26 feet 10 inches, at the height of 5 feet from the ground, is reckoned to be 800 years old. Three oaks in Cranbourne Chase, the oldest of which is probably 450 years, are called respectively, Queen Anne, Queen Charlotte, and Queen Victoria, these names it is scarcely necessary to explain, having been given since they evolved from their sapling stage. Herne's Oak, which Shakespeare memorialises in *The Merry Wives*, was, according to some blown down in a storm in 1863, and a sapling was planted to mark the spot. According to others it was cut down in mistake with other decayed trees by order of George III. At one corner of the Park there are some dozen oak trees, all as old as the Norman Conquest.

In fact, wherever one glances, be it at an old elm, or a bit of old carving half hidden in grass, or a china cup in the drawing-room, or a picture in the library, from the marble sarcophagus erected in memory of the Prince Consort to a blade of grass on the terrace, one finds endless cause for interest and deeper investigation. Such historical associations cling to every stone or crumb of earth, such romantic stories are whispered to one at every turn, such echoes of old-world times are re-called at every foot-fall, that no one could weary of visiting again and again this wondrous spot, to dream of bygone faces, fashions, and manners. And as one gazes, one feels the same pride in its beauty as stirred the hearts of Henry III. and Edward III., one understands the desire of the world-satiated Henry VIII. to rest in peace by the side of his best loved queen under those cool gray stones, and one feels a deep thankfulness that the storm-tossed Charles is at rest for evermore in that calm, sanctified, world-remote spot.

And Windsor does more than turn one's thoughts down the vista of past ages, it ennobles, it purifies. A reverence, an awe that only the sublime can inspire, takes possession of one's heart when one contemplates this most glorious of England's royal homes. Nor has the hand of time dimmed its lustre. Windsor is still the home of the illustrious Queen whom all her subjects delight to honour. It is associated with tender memories of all the joys and many sorrows which the Ruler of our mighty Empire has experienced during the course of her long and glorious reign. And when we reflect on all that our Queen has done for the

welfare of our nation, and of the vast Empire over which she rules, we can but echo the Laureate's words: —

"May she rule us long,
And leave us rulers of her blood
As noble till the latest day!
May children of our children say,
She wrought her people lasting good;
Her court was pure; her life serene;
God gave her peace; her land reposed;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her a Mother, Wife, and Queen."

And ever mindful of her great sorrow let us say: —

"The love of all Thy sons encompass Thee,
The love of all Thy daughters cherish Thee,
The love of all Thy people comfort Thee,
Till God's love set Thee at His side again."

Wallingford Castle

By J.E. Field, m.a

The Castle, to which Wallingford owes its importance through six centuries of our annals, may have had its origin in a primitive fortress belonging to the original settlement upon the river-bank. But its actual history begins in the reign of Edward the Confessor, who, according to Domesday, had fifteen acres here, where a body of his huscarles or military retainers lived; these acres being the same that Milo Crispin, the Norman lord of the Castle, was occupying at the time of the Survey.

Whatever fortress existed in Edward's day was held by Wigod, the kinsman and cupbearer to the King; and the fact that Wigod favoured the cause of the Norman Duke, coupled with the circumstance of an advantageous position on an important ford of the river, caused Wallingford and its Castle to become what they were in history.

Hither, in consequence of the welcome offered by the English Thane, William came after the Battle of Hastings, when London was fortified against him; and here he received the homage of Archbishop Stigand and the English nobles. Before moving back towards London he made the Norman influence secure at

Wallingford by the marriage of his favourite chieftain, Robert D'Oilgi, with Wigod's daughter, who became eventually, if she was not already, heiress of the castle; for her only brother fell in battle, fighting by William's side against his son Robert. The King remained to take part in the festivities of the marriage, and ordered D'Oilgi to build a castle upon his new inheritance. In five years the castle was completed. D'Oilgi had an only daughter, Maud, who was married to another Norman chieftain, Milo Crispin, and after his death she became the wife of Brien Fitz-Count.

Tradition and history point to each of these lords in turn as having made additions to the castle which their father-in-law erected; for Crispin is said to have been the founder of the Collegiate Church in the southern precinct, and Fitz-Count is recorded as the builder of the famous dungeon called Cloere Brien, or Brien's Close, in the north-western precinct. Further additions and renovations were made in later times; but under these Norman owners the Castle must have extended itself to the dimensions which it retained to the last, and of which we can still trace the relics.

From the river bank a few yards above the bridge it is easy to form an idea of what the great Norman fortress was. The lofty mound upon which the Keep was built, perhaps a prehistoric tumulus in its origin, is still the most prominent object, though all vestiges of the tower and its outworks have now disappeared, giving place to a luxuriant growth of forest trees. Close beside

this mound, traces of the southern moat are to be seen, opening out upon the ditch which still separates the castle grounds from the meadow beside the river. The broken ground rising within the ditch shows the line of the eastern front of the castle with its projecting bastions overlooking the river, though all that now remains is an ivy-covered ruin with the opening of a large window, known as the Queen's Tower. In the background, and more to the right, is another fragmentary ruin, forming a central portion of the north wall; while a modern boat-house marks the outflow of the moat at its north-eastern angle. From this point along the northern front a triple entrenchment is clearly shown by the undulations of the ground; the innermost ditch, close beneath the wall, being the moat of the Castle itself, while the second is the moat of the Castle precincts enclosing a space of intermediate ground on the west and south, and the outermost is the moat which enclosed the whole town; the three being brought close together in parallel lines along this side of the Castle. It must have been from this point of view, that Leland, in Henry the Eighth's reign, described the Castle as having "three dikes, large, deep, and well watered; about each of the two first dikes are embattled walls, sore in ruin and for the most part defaced; all the goodly buildings, with the towers and dungeon, be within the three dikes." Camden, who tells that "the size and magnificence of the Castle used to strike me with amazement when I came hither, a lad, from Oxford," describes it more accurately as "environed with a double wall and a double ditch."

South of the great mound and its protecting moat is the ruined tower and south wall of the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas, now surmounted by a modern turret; and adjoining it are some fragments of the other buildings of the college, with a good doorway and some windows of perpendicular character. Beyond these ruins a large portion of the second moat is to be seen. The south-western angle of the precincts, with the banks of the moat well preserved before it and behind it, is occupied by the modern dwelling-house. Lastly, near the north-western angle, where this outer precinct ends, the site of Brien Fitzcount's dungeon is shown; and the remains of it, with massive rings fixed to the stonework, existed here within the present century.

If the Norman Conqueror himself gained no direct advantage from the castle which he required D'Oilgi to build, his policy certainly bore its fruit in the days of his grandchildren. In the civil wars of Stephen's reign Brien Fitzcount was a leading supporter of Maud, the daughter of Henry Beauclerk and widow of the Emperor Henry IV. of Germany. The escape of the Empress from Oxford Castle, her flight in white garments through snow and ice by night to Abingdon, and her safe arrival at Wallingford Castle, are a familiar tale, perhaps embellished through the ages, but well grounded in history. Stephen set up opposing forts across the river at Crowmarsh, and traces of them may still be seen on either side of the road near the eastern end of the bridge, while the meadow on the north is still called the Barbican.

Terrible stories are told of the sufferings endured by followers

of Stephen who had the misfortune to become prisoners here under Fitzcount's custody; and for one influential prisoner, William Martel, the new dungeon of Brien's Close was made, from which he was only released on condition of delivering up the Castle of Shirburn and its adjacent lands as a ransom. Throughout the war Wallingford Castle under its indomitable lord was the most powerful of all the strongholds of the empress; and it was here, in a meadow beneath the walls, that the war was ended, through the treaty proposed by the Earl of Arundel, granting the kingdom to Stephen for his life and the succession to the Empress's son, Henry Plantagenet.

Brien Fitzcount took the cross and died in the Holy Land; his wife spent the rest of her life in a convent; their two sons were lepers; and the Castle of Wallingford passed to the new King, Henry II. The part which it had taken in the cause of the Empress and her son had its reward in the high position which it occupied under the Plantagenet Kings. Henry favoured the town with special privileges, apparently exceeding any that were granted elsewhere; and here, at Easter 1155, he held his first Parliament. At Henry's death, Richard Cœur de Lion, before starting for the Holy Land, gave to his brother John the Honour of Wallingford; and one of John's first acts of rebellion was to gain possession of the Castle also, which the King had left in charge of the Archbishop of Rouen. When the barons under the Earl of Leicester recovered it for the King, the Queen Dowager, Eleanor of Poitou, became its custodian; and it is probably from

her that the ruined fragment of the east front bore the name of the Queen's Tower, and from her also, we must presume, the meadow in front of it was called the Queen's Arbour. The value which John set upon the place still continued when he became King, as we may infer from his frequent visits to it, and the additions which he made to its garrison. His younger son, Richard, Earl of Cornwall and afterwards King of the Romans, was made Constable at the close of John's reign; and the Castle and Honour was eventually bestowed upon him by his brother Henry III.

Earl Richard probably did more both for the castle and the town than any other of its lords. He lived here in great state, enriching the townsmen by the liberal expenditure of his wealth and by the hospitality with which he entertained the court and the nobles of the realm. Two years after he came into possession he built the great hall of the Castle, and though this has disappeared, some of the arches of the bridge survive, vaulted with massive ribs, which certainly belong to this period and are probably Richard's work. Here too he brought his second bride, Senchia of Provence, in 1242, when the King and his court took part in sumptuous festivities to welcome her. He was elected King of the Romans in 1256, but the subsequent coronation at Rome, which would have made him German Emperor, never took place. Afterwards, when he was absent in Germany, the barons under Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, were rebelling against the King, and Wallingford Castle fell into their hands. The Countess

of Leicester was residing here in 1262, when the Earl visited her and a hundred and sixty-two horses were picketed within the Castle walls. The next year Richard was again in possession, and repelled successfully an assault of the barons; but after the disastrous battle of Lewes in 1264, it fell into Leicester's hands once more, and both Richard and the King, as well as Prince Henry, the son of Richard, were prisoners in it. The two Kings were removed to Kenilworth; but the next year, when Prince Edward, the King's son, defeated the barons at Evesham, King Henry was restored to his throne and Richard returned to his Castle. He died in the spring of 1272, and Wallingford Castle, together with the earldom of Cornwall, passed to his son Edmund. The new earl maintained the magnificence of his father. At the close of the year he introduced his bride, Margaret de Clare, sister of the Earl of Gloucester, with a splendid entertainment; he frequently received as a guest his cousin, King Edward I.; and he so largely augmented the Collegiate Church of St. Nicholas in the Castle that he is often called its founder. When he died, in 1299, Wallingford fell to the King. Immediately upon the accession of Edward II., the Earldom of Cornwall, with the lordship of Wallingford, was bestowed upon his unworthy favourite, Piers de Gaveston, who married Earl Edmund's widow; but his insolent career was cut short by the Earl of Warwick, under whose custody he was beheaded at Blacklow Hill. Another of the King's favourites, Hugh Despencer the younger, held the Castle and Honour for a time, until, in

1326, he fell a victim to the vengeance of Queen Isabella, who was now in open rebellion against her husband. She had already become possessed of the Castle, and eventually bestowed it upon her paramour, Roger Mortimer. Then followed the horrible murder of Edward II. at Berkeley; then Mortimer paid the penalty of his crimes at Tyburn, and Isabella became a prisoner at Castle Rising. Edward III. erected the earldom of Cornwall into a dukedom, and Parliament settled it in perpetuity upon the sovereign's eldest son, the Castle and Honour of Wallingford being one of the possessions by which the princely dignity was to be supported. Thus the Black Prince became its lord for forty years. After his marriage with Joan, the Fair Maid of Kent, in 1361, this was their most frequent place of residence. Here also the princess remained during the nine years of her widowhood, and here she died, and probably was buried, in 1385. Meanwhile the Black Death had visited the town in 1343; the population had been greatly diminished; several of the fourteen churches had been closed, never to be re-opened; the prosperity and attractiveness of the place was gone, and the Castle was no longer chosen as a favourite residence of royalty. But when it reverted to the crown at the death of the Princess, it was kept up as a military fortress of the first rank, under a constable appointed by the king, and its prominence in history was scarcely lessened. John Beaufort, the son of John of Gaunt, became constable in 1397, and two years later Thomas Chaucer was appointed. He was the reputed son, probably the step-son, of Geoffrey Chaucer

the poet, and was almost certainly, like his predecessor, of royal but illegitimate parentage. Under his custody, the youthful Queen Isabella of Valois, the affianced bride of Richard II., was protected at the time of Bolingbroke's invasion, until Richard became a prisoner and the Castle surrendered to the usurper, when the child-queen was carried from one place to another, and at last, in her fourteenth year, returned as a widow to her home in France. A letter of the new King, Henry IV., to his council, relating to Queen Isabella's departure, is dated from Wallingford in 1402. Chaucer was still the constable when the Castle and Honour were settled by King Henry V. upon his bride, Katherine of Valois, at their marriage in 1420. Two years later, the infant King Henry VI. succeeded to his throne, and in 1428, when he was taken from his mother's care, the Castle of Wallingford was assigned to him as one of his summer residences, under the guardianship of the Earl of Warwick. Chaucer died in 1434, and William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, his son-in-law, appears to have succeeded him as constable of the Castle. Here Suffolk had under his charge an important captive, Owen Tudor, an esquire of the body to the king, as he had been previously to Henry V. with whom he had fought at Agincourt; and here in his dungeon a secret marriage is said to have taken place between Tudor and the Dowager Queen Katherine, who had long been attached to him, the ceremony being performed by a priest who was his fellow-prisoner, while a servant who attended him was the only witness. Suffolk, now raised to a dukedom, was accused

by the populace of betraying his country to the French and preparing to fortify Wallingford on their behalf; and while the King befriended him, he was barbarously beheaded at sea; but his widow Alice, Chaucer's daughter, was made custodian of the Castle in his place. The House of Lancaster had raised Alice de la Pole to her dignities and honours; yet when the commencement of the Wars of the Roses favoured the rival house, she at once transferred her support to the Yorkists. In 1461, Edward of York became King, and the reward of Alice's faithlessness was the marriage of the young Duke, her son, with the lady Elizabeth, the King's sister, while she herself retained her Castle. There the heartless duchess and her son received under their custody the ex-Queen Margaret of Anjou, who had been the friend and patroness of her youth, but who now remained for five years her prisoner, until in 1476 her ransom was paid, and she returned to France.

In the events of the succeeding years there is little of immediate connection with Wallingford. Lord Lovell, who had been a ward of the Duke of Suffolk, was made constable by Richard III., but he fled to Flanders when his master fell at Bosworth. Henry VII. reinstated Suffolk in the office, which he held for life, in spite of the rebellion of his son, Lord Lincoln, whom Edward IV., his uncle, had designated as his heir. After him the office was held for a time by Arthur, Prince of Wales. On one occasion at least, in 1518, Henry VIII. and his Court appear to have been residing here. Some twelve years later he

entirely renovated the College of St. Nicholas; to which shortly afterwards "a fair steeple of stone," as Leland describes it, was added by Dr. Underhill, the Dean. No new appointment to the office of constable appears until 1535, when it was granted to Henry Norris, a nephew of the Lord Lovell who had held it fifty years before; but after six months he fell a victim to the King's displeasure and died upon the scaffold. In 1540 an Act of Parliament separated the Castle and Honour from the Duchy of Cornwall and annexed it to the Crown.

Edward VI. dissolved the College, and its buildings were shortly afterwards dismantled, together with those of the Castle-Keep and the Gatehouse. In the next reigns the lead and stones were conveyed in large quantities to Windsor Castle to be used in repairs and in building the Poor Knights' lodgings. Yet the main fabric of the Castle remained, and was used for the imprisonment of heretics in the early years of Elizabeth. During all this time Sir Francis Knollys was constable, having been appointed to the office by Edward VI. in 1551. In the latter part of Elizabeth's reign he was succeeded by his son, Sir William, who became Viscount Wallingford under James I., and Earl of Banbury under Charles I.

We come now to the closing scene. The Castle was strongly fortified by King Charles at the commencement of the Civil War, and Colonel Blagge, an officer of distinguished courage in the King's army, was placed in charge of it, the King coming for a day and night to inspect the fortifications in 1643. Three years

later, when every other castle had been captured except Raglan on the Welsh border and Pendennis in Cornwall, Wallingford still held out for the King's cause. The town was closely surrounded by the troops of the Parliament; but as long as there was any possibility of resistance the Governor refused to yield. For sixty-five days the resistance lasted, and only five of the garrison had fallen. At last, when all supplies were exhausted, Colonel Blagge consented to make terms with Fairfax; and on July 29th, 1646, he was permitted to lead out his officers and men with flying colours and martial music as if they had been the victors. The Castle was a state prison during the remainder of the war, but the old sentiment seems to have lingered about the place to the last. In 1652 a conspiracy was detected for delivering it up to King Charles II., for which a soldier of the garrison was condemned to death, and an order was issued for the demolition of the building.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.