

THE CHAPELS ROYAL OF BRITAIN.

VI. THE CHAPEL ROYAL, HAMPTON COURT.

BY J. CRESSWELL ROSCAMP, M.E.

OF all Palaces in England surely there is none to compare with Hampton Court in its homely, domestic aspect of delightfulness. While Windsor is the most noble and carries the greatest historical interest, at Hampton Court linger the personalities of the Monarchs who made it their home, and for artistic and historic charm it is unsurpassed by any except that noble pile.

The first mention of Hampton is to be found in the Domesday Book in 1086, "Where the manor of Hamntone . . . was held by Walter de Valeric and valued including arable lands at £39 a year," a fairly large sum at that period. Wolsey acquired the Demesne and manor in 1514, taking it on a ninety-nine years' lease at a rent of fifty pounds per annum from the prior of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, whose order had held it in their possession from 1312. It was to Cardinal Wolsey that it owed the magnificent buildings and grounds that were erected and laid out, though many alterations were made later by the famous architect Wren. The effect of the two great styles, however, blended as only a Wren could have blended them, is truly fine, while its position on the banks of the Thames puts the finishing touch to its beauty.

The Chapel somewhat resembles the style of Henry the Seventh's Chapel at Westminster. It was much altered in the reign of Queen Anne, but the restoration was carried out with consummate good taste. It has fine perpendicular windows and a fan-shaped roof with pendants and bosses "excellently fretted and gilt" reminiscent of Tudor splendour. Some lovely carving by Grinling Gibbons is to be seen at the East end, but the "altar piece" and all the gorgeous vestments were swept away by the Puritans. The stained glass was put in when the palace was restored in 1847. Gibbons' beautiful staircase leading to the Royal pew, panelled with Norwegian oak and with the ceiling painted by Verrio, is also of Queen Anne's time, for a crown supported by Cherubs has the initials "A.R." upon it, and is typical of the delicacy with

which the restoration was carried out. In Wolsey's time the Chapel was served like a Cathedral. "There was a dean, a great divine, a man of excellent learning, ten singing priests and twenty-four children; on festivals forty or fifty priests assisted at the services and walked in procession before the Cardinal. No minstrels played as well, no children sang as sweetly as those of Wolsey's choir." The King, whose love of music was known to all, complained that Wolsey's Chapel was "better served than our own."

The first Royal event to take place in the Chapel was the baptism of Prince Edward, afterwards Edward the Sixth. The Prince was born on October 12th, and his mother Queen Jane died on the twenty-fifth of the same month, 1537. Edward VI spent most of his early life at Hampton Court, and was a most regular attendant at the Chapel. "The year before his accession he kept Christmas at Hampton Court, and made offerings at Mass on the feast of Saint Stephen, Saint John and Childermas; on the latter day (Holy Innocents) he gave the children of the King's Chapel forty shillings for singing *Gloria in Excelsis* on Christmas Day."

Queen Elizabeth was also frequent in her attendance at the Chapel when in residence. She was first brought here a prisoner during the Easter of 1555, when King Philip was paying a visit to Queen Mary. She convinced Mary of her loyalty and was set free, staying there throughout the summer and being treated with great kindness by Philip. She often attended Mass in the Chapel. It is said that one day Mary questioned her as to her belief on Transubstantiation and she replied in the lines:—

" Christ was the Word that spake it,
He took the bread and brake it;
And what His words did make it
That I believe and take it."

Four years after this visit Elizabeth came again to Hampton Court as Queen. Fond of music and dancing and country life, Elizabeth made much use of the Court and entertained her Courtiers sumptuously with many masques and banquets and revels. It was here, in the winter of 1568, Murray produced the fatal "Casket letter" that decided the case against Mary, Queen of Scots.

Many brilliant scenes are on record of the entertainments and revelries that took place during the earlier years of the reign of

James the First and his Queen, Anne of Denmark. Later on in his reign came the conflicts in connexion with the differences between the Church of England and the Puritans, and many meetings were held at Hampton Court. It was at this time too that the most beautiful of books, the authorized version of the Bible, was completed.

Cromwell sold the treasures of the Court and Chapel and during his tenure services of only a desultory description were performed.

Queen Anne restored the Chapel on her succession to the throne, "adorning it with oak panellings and carvings by Grinling Gibbons, and a royal pew with a painted ceiling."

George the First and George the Second both stayed a large part of their time at Hampton Court, but George the Third disliked the place owing, it is said, to his grandfather, George the Second, having terrified him there when a child. During his reign the State apartments were stripped, and the Palace divided up into suites of rooms for distinguished people on retirement.

Henry the Eighth brought the unhappy Katherine Howard here on his marriage to her, and kneeling in the Chapel, thanked God for giving him so truthful, pure and loving a spouse. Next day, when a special mass should have testified to his happiness, Cranmer informed him of her intrigues and misconduct with Francis Derham that ultimately led to the execution of both herself and the Viscountess Rochford in 1542. Oftentimes, when the King was at prayers, it is said that she attempted to reach him to explain and beg forgiveness, but she was prevented and would be taken off down the gallery behind the Royal pew screaming. This gallery is still supposed to be haunted and to ring with her cries for mercy when all else is still. Jane Seymour, too, is said to haunt the Palace and wander therein, clothed in white, ever and anon coming to the room in which she died, as if in search of the infant she left behind. When Jane Seymour died the infant Prince was put in the hands of Mistress Sibel Penn, a faithful and loving foster-mother who brought him up with all the devotion that framed his kindly nature. She lived nine years after the death of the Prince, who had succeeded Henry in 1547 as King Edward the Sixth, and died of smallpox in 1562. She is supposed to haunt the Palace clothed in a grey robe and hood.

The Chapel is still used for services by the residents, and it

holds about three hundred and fifty persons. Queen Victoria, with her accustomed gracious thoughtfulness for the enjoyments of her subjects, threw open the grounds and Palace to the public, and it is one of the treasured boons of Londoners to be able to leave the city for a space and inhale the fresh air, and the perfume of the lovely flowers of Hampton Court. Cardinal Wolsey, with all his love for pomp and magnificence, built a Palace fitting for any monarch, and never anticipated that his fickle, fitful Sovereign would deprive him of it, as of all his honours as well. Later William of Orange had it restored by that eminent architect, Sir Christopher Wren, making of it a rival of the beauties of Versailles. And so though much of the Tudor building was replaced by the more classical work of Wren, the whole is a wonderful instance of the skill with which that master mind could blend the two different styles of architecture, leaving it, in its superb surroundings, surely the most beautiful of all the Royal residences.

J. C. ROSCAMP.

STUDIES IN TEXTS.

Suggestions for Sermons from Current Literature.

BY THE REV. HARRINGTON C. LEES, M.A.

XI. CHRISTIAN MERRIMENT.

Texts.—"The Son of Man is come eating and drinking." "This man eateth with sinners." "Let us eat and be merry." "Ye may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom." (St. Luke vii. 34; xv. 2, 23; xxii. 30.)

[Book of the Month: McLachlan's ST. LUKE* = M. Other ref.,

Findlay's *Jesus as they knew Him*, Part II. = F. Moule's

Ephesian Studies = ES. Glover's *Jesus of History* = G.

Chesterton's *Charles Dickens* = C. *Christmas Books* = CB.

Poems = CP. Lees' *Divine Master in Home Life* = L.]

* *St. Luke: The Man and his Work*, by H. McLachlan, M.A., B.D., Lecturer in University of Manchester, published by Longmans, Green & Co. 7s. 6d. Scholarly, thorough, sane, modern, readable, stimulating. In view of the Communion Feast, Christmas morning sermons should be brief and bright. This study is meant to be bright. Its fullness has an opportunity this year of double ministry "on the Feast of Stephen," which falls on Sunday.