

bound to pass in following up the river's shore. But no one interfered with us though it must be admitted that in our inexperienced Canadian hearts we expected momentarily during our stay in England to be haled before a bewigged worthy to answer for some terrible breach of the laws of the land. That feeling of diffidence possibly accounted for the bravado of our boys who walking warily in a strange land whistled and swaggered to keep up their courage and impress the natives with their nonchalance.

We found an upturned punt on tressels and examined the sea-monster with interest and concluded that it was a heavy cumbersome contraption which did not justify the pages devoted to it in English literature. A Peterboro canoe we thought, was a much more providential arrangement. But Nemesis pursued us and almost caught up. While the people did not drive us from their land nevertheless when we were opposite "the little island in the river, where the aspens dusk and shiver" and were in a state bordering on ecstasy as we contemplated historic Runnymede, some one yelled,—*"Take the fence boys."*—which we all very promptly did just in time to escape the rush of an enraged bull which had charged down like a runaway rhinoceros. But with true British fairness he did not pursue us beyond his private palings. That bull seemed the embodiment of something vaguely suggested by the event connected with this spot.

Having recovered ourselves we sat down on the grassy bank and endeavoured to visualise history, a process disturbed by the subconscious knowledge that an untamed force was there at our elbows chafing to hurl itself into our midst and shatter our ideals into bits.

For eight hundred years the Kings and Queens of England had made Windsor their favorite residence. It was undoubtedly of Norman origin for we are informed that William the Conqueror acquired the ground from the monks of Westminster and in 1086 there is an entry in Domesday Book referring to a fortress on the present site. It grew in importance and in the reign of Henry II had attained the proportions and magnificence of a royal palace. From thence King John rode daily to the conference held on the little island of Runnymede and there after exhausting every excuse for delay, at last gave unwilling consent to Magna Charta.

It was not a difficult feat of imagination to wish away the present day cottages and a few additional signs of man's occupation; and the result was rather surprising. Remove all the conifers from any one of a dozen spots in the lower Fraser valley and the little bushy island in the river would be a fair representation of Runnymede.

Something of the weird loneliness of the wilderness came over us as after obliterating modern England we translated ourselves in imagination to that far distant time when the keystone of English liberties was painfully put in place by those master-masons, the high-tempered barons who certainly wrought better than they knew.

In the course of many walks we developed an affection for the Forest of Windsor which, with the Parks, we were informed, at one time included the whole of Berkshire with a circumference of 120 miles. The present area of the Forest is about 10,000 acres, with 3,000 in the Great Park and 500 in the Home or Little Park.

After the magnificent distances and vast expanses of Canada it was always amusing to contemplate certain topographical features in England which, but for differences due to the human factor and a golden mist of historical association, would attract but scant attention. Virginia Water was a case in point. The streamlet anciently known as Virginia River was excavated and dammed in 1750 making an artificial lake of 130 acres two miles long. On its banks is a fishing cottage with a gallery extending the whole length of the building for the accommodation of Royal Anglers. The lake

which is full of pike, drains over an artificial waterfall near the Southampton High Road. We said amiable things about this man-made geography and turned our attention to the Ruins brought from Tripoli. The fragments included an altar dedicated to Jupiter Helios, but the odds and ends are promiscuously displayed and lack unity of effect. The trees however attracted our attention, among them being the Veteran, known as William the Conqueror's Oak. It is said to have been a favorite of the fiery Duke, who, it should be mentioned made this a Royal Forest and enacted laws for its preservation. The age of the tree is estimated at 1500 years, quite a venerable oak, having attained nearly half of its present age before William was born. It stands near Cranbourn, which by-the-way, is now used as a luncheon room when the Royal shooting parties visit the Park preserves.

Not far from the Veteran is the largest tree in the Park with a circumference of 35 feet and in the vicinity is one of the first oak plantations ever made in England, sown by order of Lord Burleigh at the time of the Spanish Armada, for it was feared that the Forest of Dean might fall into the hands of the Spaniards which would thus deprive England of her timber sources. That Lord Burleigh's foresight was correct appears from the discovery among the documents captured with the Spanish fleet, of instructions issued by the King Philip of Spain to his Admirals to cut down the Forest of Dean and thus effectually cripple the English Navy.

Large numbers of trees were planted by Queen Victoria and other sovereigns and princes.

Herne's Oak near Frogmore in the Home Park has been rendered famous by passages in Shakespeare's *"Merry Wives of Windsor."* The story attached to this tree is generally supposed to owe its origin to Richard Herne, a Keeper of the Forest in the reign of Henry VIII, who having committed an offence, hanged himself from a branch, and has ever since haunted the neighborhood, appearing with antlers about his head to the terror of the former inhabitants of the Park.

During the last fifty years nothing of importance has been added to Windsor Castle, although liberal sums are annually expended in meeting modern requirements, while the whole is maintained in perfect repair. A sense of pride may well overtake the visitor as he takes a last look at the venerable buildings. The grandeur of the site, the stateliness of the walls, the long association with the chief events in English history, the comprehensiveness of its collection in art and literature, render Windsor Castle a home full worthy of that Sovereign to whose guidance has been entrusted the destinies of the British people.

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