

CARNARVON CASTLE.

BY NETTIE B. WILCOX.

When England became a settled kingdom, with a number of divisions whose princes were under the English king, and whose people paid dues to him, Wales was one of these divisions, and at times the Welsh were very troublesome, refusing to pay dues, or submit to the will of the king. Castles were built and given to English nobles, to whom was allowed all the land they could seize from the Welsh, and the people were oppressed in various ways, till Llewellyn became Prince of North Wales. When Henry III., a boy only nine years old, was crowned, Llewellyn acknowledged him as king, and for fifty-six years rendered obedience to him as superior sovereign; but when Edward I. became king, Llewellyn at last threw off the yoke, and resisted sturdily. He was finally forced to submit; but falling in an encounter with an English knight, his brother David, claiming to be legal sovereign of North Wales, summoned a council of Welsh chieftains at Denbigh, a little town in the north of Wales. They determined to commence hostilities against the English, but were not successful. David was imprisoned, and this was the end of Welsh independence.

Wales was united to England, and Edward I. determined to secure the submission and willing obedience of its people. It is said he promised them a prince who could not speak a word of English. Now, he had a baby-boy who was afterward Edward II.; he presented him as the promised prince, and, ever since, the oldest son of the English king is called the Prince of Wales.

This little prince lived in Carnarvon, the largest of the one hundred and forty-three castles in North Wales, and it is of the beautiful ruin of this castle that I will first tell you.

It is on a high hill in the western part of Wales; climbing the hill you come upon a huge mass of gray stone, with immense towers; on two sides surrounded by a river, while a moat or ditch protects the other two. Originally there were thirteen towers; five have fallen, and the stones have been carried away by the inhabitants of the town to build their quaint little houses.

The castle has only narrow openings for windows on the outside; these are not more than four inches wide, but the walls are ten feet thick and the windows are five or six feet wide on the inside, the sides slanting close together through the thickness of the wall as they get near the outside, thus forming a kind of room in each window.

In those days, battles were

fought and castles defended principally with cross-bows and arrows, and these window-niches furnished standing room for six or eight men, who in turn discharged their arrows at the enemy.

It was very easy for them, close to the narrow openings, to aim carefully at the enemy, but almost impossible for the outsiders to send their arrows where they would take effect.

The towers are full of crooked passages and narrow, stone staircases, with rooms of all sizes and shapes. Entering the door at the end of the path and passing up the worn and broken stone steps, I almost lost my way in dark galleries, where the chattering of the birds which have appropriated the deep windows for their nests, and the sound of my own footsteps re-echoed till I had hardly courage to complete the ascent. At last it grew lighter, and I found myself in the open space

room. The old histories say he was born in the tower, but there are always people who like to spoil a good story, and these say he was three years old when brought there, I like the old story, so I asked a guide to show me where the prince was born. Entering the same door, we climbed the steps till we reached the room in the second story, lighted by the narrow window to the left of the door. The little square window just above it lighted the "confessional," a little niche in the wall still holding the receptacle for holy water. This room passed, we went clear around the tower, till we came through the narrowest of all passages to a room only ten feet by twelve. This was certainly the room of Queen Eleanor and the first Prince of Wales, whether he was born there, or brought when a very small boy. Back of the window is a narrow door

the Eagle and Royal towers, indicated now only by a line of stones left for the purpose. The kitchens were directly opposite, and the places which years ago held the boilers are still to be seen, as is also the end of the leaden water pipe away back in the walls; trophy hunters have carried away as much of it as their arms could reach. The castle was entered by two gates; the king's gate, or general entrance, and one smaller, but more beautiful, through which Queen Eleanor first entered Carnarvon. This gate is the most picturesque part of the castle, being partially in ruins and covered with ivy and wall-flowers.

Around the whole were high walls with towers at intervals, a part of the town of Carnarvon being now built within them.

But I think boys care less for the history of these old ruins than for the pleasure of climbing around them. It is possible that the account of Carnarvon at least may lead some of you to study enough of English history so that, when you cross the Atlantic and have the opportunity to see what now you read of, you will not have to depend upon poor guides, or spend half your time in hunting up why and by whom the grand old castles were built,—St. Nicholas.

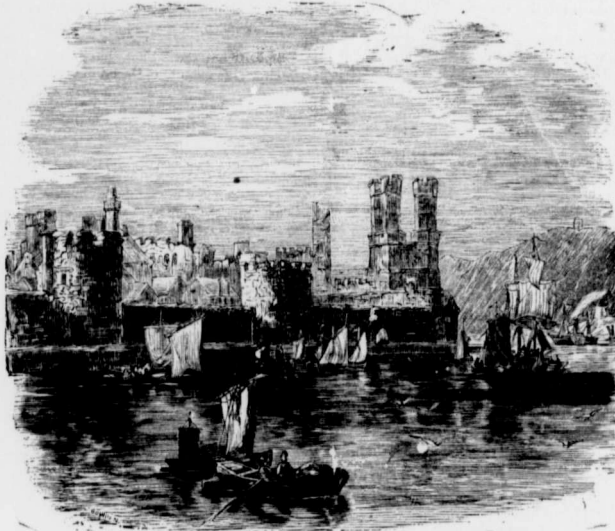
TRUE POLITENESS.

A poor Arab going through the desert met with a sparkling spring. Accustomed to brackish water, a draught from this sweet well in the wilderness seemed, in his simple mind, a present to the caliph. So he fill the leathern bottle, and, after a weary tramp, laid his gift at his sovereign's feet.

The monarch with a magnanimity that may put many a Christian to blush, called for a cup and drank freely, and then with a smile thanked the Arab and presented him with a reward.

The courtiers pressed eagerly around for a draught of the wonderful water which was regarded as worthy such a princely acknowledgment. To their surprise, the caliph forbade them touch a drop. Then after the simple-hearted giver left the royal presence, with a new spring of joy welling up in his heart, the monarch explained his motive of prohibition.

"During the long journey, the water in his leather bottle had become impure and distasteful; but it was an offering of love, and as such I accepted it with pleasure. I feared, however, that if I allowed another to taste it, he would not conceal his disgust. Therefore it was that I forbade you to partake lest the heart of the poor man would be wounded."



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between the two smaller towers.

In the centre of the main tower, in the good old times, there were five rooms, one above another. The floors have fallen, and, looking over the inner wall, I could see only the holes where floor-beams had rested, and a heap of ruins at the bottom. Around these central halls, which must have been lighted by artificial means, were smaller rooms, and staircases only wide enough for one person to pass. At the end of each staircase is a door, so that, granting the enemy succeeded in forcing passage to the court,—a large oblong square in the centre of the castle,—a single soldier could defend such a narrow staircase and yet be safe himself.

I suppose boys would climb to the top of the small tower where flag-staff stands. I did not care to do so, so I went down and began a search for Prince Edward's

which opens upon a walk upon the walls, called Queen Eleanor's walk. She could go outside the castle walls, and it would not be pleasant for her in the court with soldiers passing to and fro, and her only exercise out-of-doors had to be taken on this narrow path. When the walls were in repair she could walk from this tower to the next, through that to another wall, and so on around the castle, entering back of the confessional. I followed the walk a little way, and was glad enough that I was not compelled, like the poor queen, to take all my fresh air on a path two feet wide on castle walls. This tower, called Eagle Tower, was the strongest of the thirteen, and for this reason the queen was placed in it; the next, to the left, was the Royal Tower, and the enemy would naturally go there to look for the baby prince. The banqueting hall occupied the space between