

of the "Royal Library." They consisted chiefly of old, but by no means choice, editions of ancient and modern classics of nearly all countries in Europe; but there were also topographical works mainly relating to Great Britain, county histories, a multitude of ancient historical works, mostly in Latin, and many relating to the middle ages of Italy, France, and Germany, written in the languages of their respective countries. There were also some early printed books—such as several Aldines and Elzevirs—but in a few instances only of some rarity or value. It was, decided that all these so repeatedly transported volumes should undergo one more removal before they were to be finally deposited at Windsor Castle itself. The internal arrangement and fitting up of the apartments destined to hold the library was intrusted to Sir Jeffry Wyattville.

The part of the Castle in which they are sited faces towards the north, overlooking a corner of the town of Windsor, and, somewhat further off, Eton. It was built by order of Queen Elizabeth, and formed, for many years, the suite of rooms specially devoted to the royal residence. These apartments are spacious and elegant in their distribution. The largest of them, which is very fine both in its size and proportion, measures nearly eight feet in length, and is very well lighted, both as a room and as a library, by seven large windows, commanding a fine view over the beautiful landscape, from which it acquires additional stateliness to the eye of the beholder. Not far from this noble apartment is the curious and elegant Blenheim Room—so called because it was there that Queen Anne, whilst sitting in her favourite boudoir, received the first news of the famous victory gained by the great Duke of Marlborough. It is a small polygonal chamber, constructed in the form of a lantern in the turret over the Norman gateway, and is, therefore, exquisite both in shape and site. Formerly it was a bay to King Henry VII.'s room, adjoining the end of Queen Elizabeth's Gallery; and in it used to be hung the flags presented each year upon the anniversary of the celebrated battle by the great duke and his direct male descendants, up to the present day, but which are now deposited in another part of the Castle.\* Through each of its four narrow, but light and airy, windows, one enjoys a different prospect for many miles around, over the well-timbered country and the green pastures bordering upon the banks of the, here as yet unpoluted and clear, river Thames. All these views offer so many charming pictures of "smiling fields," so truly English in their character, that one would have to seek in vain for their equals in many other countries. There is, at least to our knowledge, hardly any other library which could rival this one at Windsor Castle with regard to its situation, and the charms of its "surroundings." In all these respects it is truly royal, as well as in the character of its furniture, which is sumptuous and comfortable without being gaudy, and in its architectural decorations, which are sufficiently ornamental without being either extravagant or tasteless.

Let the reader only fancy himself seated in one of those substantial and commodious arm-chairs, either in the large room or in the Blenheim Chamber, turning over the leaves of a curious book, or gazing, in a tranquil state of mind, through one of the windows looking down upon the rural scenes below, and he will realize to his mind that which the ancient Romans called the *otium cum dignitate*. That the chiefs of that imperial people were accustomed to associate this sentiment of theirs with similar places, is proved by the silent, yet eloquent testimony afforded by the magnificent ruins of the various imperial libraries in and about the Eternal City. The still imposing remains of the libraries of Tiberius and Diocletian at Rome, and those of Hadrian at Tivoli, are worthy monuments of the high estimation in which literature and learning were held by those great rulers.

But to return from Imperial Rome to Royal Windsor. Sir Jeffry Wyattville terminated, in 1834, the necessary preparation of the suite of apartments which were henceforth to contain the collections of the Royal Library. During the following years, the books, which had been provisionally assembled at Cumberland Lodge, were gradually brought to the Castle, and there deposited in the various presses specially prepared for their reception. The plan according to which these volumes were finally arranged and put to rest after their numerous adventures and vicissitudes, partook, however, in its character and execution, more of the architectural than the bibliographic. This chance assemblage of literature enjoyed its undisturbed repose for the twenty-four years during which the late Mr. Glover held the office of Librarian to the Queen, in that order in which it had been definitely arranged upon its installation at Windsor Castle.

\* Before the appropriation of the suite of apartments to the purposes of the Royal Library, the turret which was built by Henry VII. was used as a place of deposit for the Marlborough flags. According to the terms by which the Duke holds the Castle of Blenheim, he is bound to send annually to Windsor Castle, on the anniversary of the battle, a white silk banner with the "Fleur de Lys" embroidered upon it. The last received was laid in the turret, and, when the next arrived, was hung up with those which had been received every year since the estate was vested in the family of the Churchills. The Duke of Wellington holds Strathfield-saye upon similar terms, and annually sends a silken tricolour to the castle.

But thanks to the, in such matters, ever-active and beneficial influence of the late Prince Consort, supported by the zeal and knowledge of Mr. Woodward, the judiciously appointed successor to the former librarian, the whole *régime* of the royal family has, of late, undergone the most essential and salutary changes. It was only natural that he whose mind was so clear, refined, and cultivated, could not bear the idea that there should be under the very roof of his own residence a collection of more than forty thousand volumes next to useless, merely because of the want of order and proper arrangement. On the other hand, it is no wonder that, until he took the matter into his own consideration, the royal library, though containing much riches, was not much more than an almost nominal appendage to the furniture of the royal household, and that the not unimportant office of Librarian to the Queen had, from want of due encouragement, gradually sunk into that of a mere sinecure.

The interest which the late Prince Consort took in this special subject, so congenial to his general character, tastes, and disposition, soon communicated itself to others. Under his influence the Royal Library assumed, as a useful establishment, new life. There is something touchingly illustrative—since he is no more—with reference to the character and worth of the man, in the sort of relation in which the royal patron of learning and the fine arts at large placed himself towards this more private object of his attention. When he was residing at Windsor Castle, most of his leisure hours were spent in the apartments of the Royal Library. There he delighted in looking at the curious works of art and of literature, not merely with the eye of what is commonly understood by the appellation of a "connoisseur," but with the keen and rapid glance of a real critic; for he not only knew what he was looking at, but was also fully able to reason upon and to judge of the many varied subjects which there came under his notice. There, also, he used to discuss the future objects and arrangements of the Library—how matters were to be managed, and in what branches new acquisitions should be made, in order to increase the value of what was already extant. And thither he was in the habit of conducting his children, in order to infuse into their minds part of his own love for what was accomplished, elegant, and refined. He likewise encouraged the various members of the household, as well as the guests staying at the Castle, to avail themselves of these resources for pleasant recreation, and for the acquisition of useful knowledge; and, by his care, they were made easily and agreeably accessible to all who felt inclined to profit by the different advantages they offered. It was in such places and at such times that the Prince ought to have been seen, in order correctly to appreciate the man. Those who have merely known him upon state occasions, or in public, will hardly be able to realize to themselves his picture as he was in private life, when freed from the irksome restraints of representation and officiality. There the reserve of the Prince, whose natural shyness so many people mistook for pride, vanished altogether before the kind cordiality of the man's warm heart. And, when all his finer qualities and feelings came into play, the casual observer could not but be highly gratified at what he was contemplating. Being as superior in mind as he was in position, he knew well how, at the same time, daily to exercise that superiority, and also to make those with whom he might happen to be engaged in more familiar converse for the moment, unconscious of the existing disparity in rank and position. This advantage arose from his possessing that delightful gift to its full extent—a quality as rare as it is charming—of being affable in the true and highest sense of the word. For his affability was never spoiled by any admixture of that sort of condescension which frequently exercises a more irritating than soothing influence upon those whom it is meant to please.

Although the plans of the Prince with respect to the Royal Library, as with respect to the many other matters of more public importance that interested him, have been immaturely arrested, one may venture to hope that they will be carried out to the extent to which he himself intended to see them fulfilled. These plans, to state them briefly, were to form a good gentleman's and diplomatist's library—to be particularly well supplied in the departments of general art and history; after that, to be well provided with topographical, genealogical, and heraldic works of reference and of authority; and, as for the remainder, to contain so much only as would be sufficient for general knowledge, without approaching professional completeness in any of its other branches. All this can, of course, only be accomplished after some time; for the work of arranging the different departments in a useful and systematic manner, of cataloguing all the books, and of supplying the various deficiencies, is a slow and laborious one. Yet, when it is completed it must be matter of satisfaction to know that the home of the best of living sovereigns is not wanting in one of the chief means for insuring the intellectual and moral welfare of her children.—*Macmillan's Magazine.*