

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

ENLARGED SERIES.—VOL. IV.

TORONTO, JUNE 14, 1884.

No. 12.

WINDSOR CASTLE.

BY THE EDITOR.

AS this is intended to be a very loyal and patriotic number of PLEASANT HOURS, we devote a part of it to an account of our visit to the castle-home of our beloved Queen—the gentle lady who rules over an empire wider than that of Alexander or a Cæsar; and who, better still, sits enthroned in the hearts of her subjects as no monarch ever did before.

The most famous royal residence in England, and one of the most magnificent royal residences in the world, is Windsor Castle. When weary of the rush and the roar, the fog and the smoke of London, a half-hour's ride will take one through some of the loveliest pastoral scenery of England to the quiet and ancient royal borough of Windsor, where everything speaks only of the past. Soon the mighty keep and lofty towers of Windsor Castle come in view as we skirt its noble park. The most striking feature is the great round tower, dominating from its height on Castle-hill, like a monarch from his throne, the grand group of lower buildings. Dating back to the days of William the Conqueror, what a story those venerable walls could tell of the tilts and tourneys, and banquets and festivals, marriages and burials of successive generations of English sovereigns! And over it waves in heavy folds on the languid air that red cross banner which is the grandest symbol of order and liberty in the wide world. Here to this winding shore—whence, say the antiquarians, the name Windlesore, shortened to Windsor—came, eight hundred years ago, the Norman Conqueror, and during all the intervening centuries here the sovereigns of England have kept their lordliest state—the mighty castle growing age by age, a symbol of that power which broadens down from century to century, firm as the round tower on its base, when thrones were rocking and falling on every side.

The deathless love of the sorrowing Queen has made the chapel an exquisite memorial of the virtues and piety of the late Prince Consort. One is shown the room in which His Royal

Highness died, a place made sacred by the loving ministrations of the grief-stricken Queen, and of his noble daughter the Princess Alice.

One climbs by a narrow stair in the thickness of the solid wall to the battlements of the ancient keep, long used as a castle palace, then as a

Like a map beneath us lie the many suites of buildings, the Royal Gardens, the Home Park, the Great Park and the Long Walk and Queen Anne's Ride—two magnificent avenues, nearly three miles long, of majestic elms. Under the bright sunlight it was a grand symphony in green and gold.

Grooms in very glossy hats, and with eyes keenly expectant of fees, do the honours of the splendid establishment, but at the cost of £70,000, which is, of course, kept scrupulously neat. Many of Her Majesty's lieges would be only too happy to be as well cared for as Her Majesty's horses and hounds. I was shown the Queen's favourite saddle horse; also the superannuated charger of the late Prince Consort, whose old age is made as reposeful as the most careful grooming and comfortable quarters can make it. At the "mews" are also kept a number of state carriages, most of them cumbersome, lumbering equipages. The Prince of Wales has also a number of horses here. "Does he ride much?" I asked. "He have to," said the groom; "he's getting so stout." The basket-carriages for His Royal Highness' children were very common-place affairs, at which many Canadian young folk would turn up their noses. But even to the Palace sorrow comes, and very very touching is the following letter from the thrice-bereaved Queen; very beautiful is the Christian faith exhibited in the lines we have italicised.

LETTER FROM THE QUEEN.

GRATITUDE FOR THE SYMPATHY OF HER LOYAL SUBJECTS.

Windsor Castle, April 14, 1884.

I have on several previous occasions given personal expression to my deep sense of the loving sympathy and loyalty of my subjects in all parts of my Empire. I wish, therefore, in my present grievous bereavement, to thank them most warmly for the very gratifying manner in which they have shown, not only their sympathy with me and my dear, so deeply-afflicted daughter-in-law, and my other children, but also their high appreciation of my beloved son's great qualities of head and heart, and of the loss he is to the country and to me. The affectionate sympathy of my loyal people, which has never failed me in weal or woe, is very soothing to my heart.

Though much shaken and sorely afflicted by the many sorrows and trials which have fallen upon me during these past years, I will not lose courage, and with the help of Him who



WINDSOR CASTLE.

prison—here James I. of Scotland was confined. From the leads is obtained one of the finest views in England, extending, it is said, into twelve counties. At the base is the deep moat, once filled with water, now planted with gay beds of flowers.

One of the things which one must not fail to do at Windsor is to visit the royal "mews" or stables—so called from the "mews" or coops in which the royal falcons were kept, three hundred years ago—such is the persistence of names in this old land.