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THE CHAPELS ROYAL OF BRITAIN.

IV. CHAPEL ROYAL, WHITEHALL.

BY J. CRESSWELL ROSCAMP, M.E.

“ Sir, you
Must no more call it York Place : that is past,
For since the Cardinal fell, that title's lost ;
'Tis now the King's, and call'd—Whitehall.”

WHITEHALL derived its name from the old Palace that stood there till it was destroyed by fire in 1698. At the present time it is principally known from being the headquarters of all the various offices connected with the Government and for the Horse Guard's building which was designed by Kent and is beautifully proportionate.

The Palace of Whitehall was originally known as “ York House,” and was the London residence of the Archbishops of York till “ it was delivered and demised to the King (Henry VIII) by Charter February 7 (1529), on the disgrace of Cardinal Wolsey, Archbishop of York, and was then called Whitehall.” It was built in 1240 by Hubert, Earl of Kent, and soon afterwards became the property of the Friars Predicant of Black Friars (Dominicans), who in 1248 sold it to Walter de Grey, Archbishop of York ; and from that time to the fall of Wolsey it belonged to the See of York. Cardinal Wolsey built much on to it including a Chapel, and it assumed under his ambitious tenure a splendour equal to, if not surpassing, that of any Royal residence. The Cardinal had a passion for architecture and building, and loved pomp and magnificence, and thus it is not surprising to find his having made great additions, as he did at Oxford and Hampton Court. At his fall, though forfeiting his own estates to the Crown, it required a man of “ Bluff King Hal's ” characteristics to appropriate the property of a See, for York House was not Wolsey's property at all.

In 1536 another Charter by Henry VIII annexed the Palace to that of Westminster, and it remained the home of the Court until the death of Mary II in 1694.

James I had intended a sumptuous Palace to be erected during his reign on account of the dilapidated condition it was getting into, but the Crown coffers were not sufficiently well re-

plenished to carry out any elaborate scheme and he had to content himself with building the Banqueting Hall, the only part of the buildings that escaped the fire that destroyed the Palace in 1698.

After the fire the Banqueting Hall was used as a chapel and in 1724 was formally converted into a Chapel Royal and was used as such until 1891, when it was closed on the advice of the Chapels Royal Commission and given over to the United Service Institution for a museum. It was rebuilt then, in 1619-1622, at a cost of £14,940, 4s. 1d., by the eminent architect Inigo Jones, who had also prepared the plans for the vast scheme King James had set his heart on, and which are preserved at Worcester College, Oxford. Accordingly the Hall, "besides being the sole relic of a Whitehall that never existed, is also the sole relic of the Whitehall that was."

"Revels at Court" thus describes the Banqueting House:—
 "A new building with a vault under, the same in length one hundred and ten feet, and in width fifty feet within, the wall of the foundation being in thickness fourteen feet, and in depth ten feet within the ground, brought up with brick; the first story to the height of sixteen feet wrought of Oxfordshire stone, cut in rustique on the outside, and brick on the inside, the walls eight feet thick, with a vault turned over on great square pillars of brick and paved in the bottom with Purbeck stone; the walls and vaulting laid with finishing mortar; the upper storey being the Banqueting House fifty-five feet in height, to the laying on and off of the roof, the walls five feet thick and wrought of Northamptonshire stone, cut in rustique with two orders of columns and pilasters, Ionic and Composite, with their Architrave, Freize, and Cornice and other ornaments; also rails and ballusters round about the tops of the buildings, all of Portland stone, with fourteen windows on each side, and one great window at the upper end; five doors of stone with frontispiece and cartoozes, the inside brought up with brick, finished over with two orders of columns and pilasters, part of stone and part of brick, with their architectural freize and cornice, with a gallery upon the two sides and the lower end borne upon great cartoozles of timber carved with rails and ballusters of timber and the floor laid with spruce deals, a strong timber roof covered with lead, and under it a ceiling divided into a fret made of great cornices enriched with carving."

The Hall is one hundred and fifteen feet long, sixty feet broad,

and fifty-five feet high and has a lofty gallery running along two sides, but the chief point is the beautiful ceiling for which Charles I employed Paul Reubens and which delineates the reception of James I by the deities of Olympus, and which is said to be 'worth over a million pounds sterling. The master mason was Nicholas Stone, who also carried out many other of Inigo Jones' designs including the York Water gate, which may be seen in the Embankment Gardens at the foot of Buckingham Street, and part of St. Mary's Church, Oxford.

Inigo Jones received a salary of 8s. 4*d.* a day as Surveyor General, with a house allowance of £46 a year, and was allowed a clerk and his incidental expenses—a paltry emolument for so great a man. Reubens is said to have had the assistance of his pupil Jordaens in his work, and to have received £3,000 for it. The Canvas is in nine compartments, the principal one representing James being translated to the celestial regions. In 1785 the work was cleaned and restored by the celebrated Italian painter Giambattista Cipriani at a cost of £2,000. This was the artist who designed the diploma of the Royal Academy. It was again cleaned and restored in 1832, when it was discovered that "the children are more than nine feet, and the full-grown figures at 20 to 25 feet in height." A bust of King James I stands at the top of the staircase and is the work of Le Soeur.

The Chapel was attended on many occasions by Royalty, and while Dr. Tait was Bishop of London the Ordinations took place there alternately with St. Paul's Cathedral, the last being on December 20, 1868. After the closing of the Chapel in 1890 the organ was given to the Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula in the Tower, and the Communion Plate to the care of the Lord Steward.

The old Chapel Royal, which was destroyed along with the Palace in the fire of 1698, was built in 1240 and on passing into the hands of the Crown in 1529 was on several occasions restored and beautified by the Sovereign, and there are many notes in Pepys' Diary of his visits there, the installation of an organ and other matters of interest. One note especially may be mentioned as somewhat humorous. Recording his being taken, on one of his visits and in the absence of the King, to the Royal Closet of the Chapel to Service, he writes, that through the hangings that part the King's Closet from the place where the ladies sat, "the Duke of

York and Mrs. Palmer did talk to one another very wantonly.”

At different times the Monarchs from Henry VIII to Charles I dwelt there, as did also Cromwell and Milton, and it was from a hole made in the wall between the upper and lower central windows of the Hall that King Charles I was led forth to the scaffold erected in the street close by. Here each year until 1891 the Royal Maundy ceremony took place on the Thursday in Holy Week. Queen Elizabeth used to perform this duty in person at Greenwich, and James II was the last monarch who officiated at it, the office afterwards being undertaken by the King's Almoner.

The staircase on the north side was added by James Wyatt in 1798, and the building was restored thirty years later by Sir John Soame. When handed over to the United Service Institution the oak pews were used to panel the walls and the bases of the pillars. A most interesting ceremony took place here on May 18, 1811, when the Eagles and other trophies “gained by the valour of our troops from the inveterate foes of Britain” were deposited within for safe keeping. George I made an annual grant of £30 to twelve Clergy, six from Oxford and six from Cambridge, to officiate in the Chapel each month in succession.

This then is all that is left of the once famous old Palace that existed in those days of splendour and pomp and magnificence. How truly indeed do we find that :—

“ The worldly hope men set their hearts upon
 Turns ashes—or it prospers, and anon,
 Like snow upon the desert's dusty face,
 Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.”

J. CRESSWELL ROSCAMP.

