

CASSELL'S FAMILY MAGAZINE.



The Royal Palace OF ST JAMES

BY MARY SPENCER WARREN.



ST. JAMES'S PALACE—it is no exaggeration to say—is better known by name than any other palace throughout the world. The very mention of it—in countries remote, and amongst peoples who speak other languages and have different

manners and customs—wins instant respect and recognition; for does not its Court wield a mightier influence than any other court, and are not its accredited emissaries the representatives of a Power than which none is mightier?

Being, then, what we may term the official headquarters of a nation on whose realms the sun never sets, St. James's Palace must ever possess a singular interest to the great majority. This is further enhanced by its past associations, indissolubly connected as it is with monarchs, statesmen, and generals famous to history.

This paper, which is illustrated from photographs by the author, was written by express permission of her Majesty the Queen.

To go back to the beginning: it was probably about the year 1100 when the first building on the present site of the palace was put up as a sort of hospital, being a lazar house for women. The site was known as St. James's Fields. The home was, it is said, dedicated to St. James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem. This seems to have flourished until the time of Henry VIII. Then this monarch, liking the position, purchased the ground, turned the occupants out, razed the hospital, put up a mansion on the spot, and, enclosing the neighbouring fields with a brick wall, surrounded himself with a fine park, at that time well stocked with game. This was at the time he married Anne Boleyn, and some of the interior still shows evidences of their joint residence within its walls.

The building, of course, has been much added to at later periods, chiefly by Charles I., Queen Anne, George II., and George III. It has a somewhat rambling appearance, and is of mixed architecture—chiefly Gothic. The front centre shows much of the original, comprising the clock-tower and gateway, and the Chapel Royal. No doubt far more of the place in its antiquity would have been

standing to this day, but for the fact of a great fire nearly ninety years ago having worked wholesale devastation. According to all accounts, the building was never replaced in its entirety, but has since presented a considerably reduced appearance in size.

The clock-tower originally carried a clock with dove-tailed wainscot dials. This is now at Hampton Court. It was replaced by another in the reign of the sailor king, and still another some thirteen years ago. This is of enormous weight and splendid construction, and has a dial measuring seven feet six inches across.

Going through the old gateway, with its guard posted on either side, one is brought direct into Colour Court—so named from the fact of the Queen's Guard having been formerly mounted there each morning, the colours being affixed to a staff in the centre. This stately ceremony now takes place in Friary Court, of which we shall get a view later on.

But we are at the doors of the Chapel Royal, and cannot do better than enter for the close view so well worth taking. The building, apart from its architectural interest, has many associations which make it more interesting still. In the first place, the Liturgy, as now used in the Church of England, was rendered here for the first time. Secondly, King Charles I. attended in these walls his last service on earth, just prior to setting out for his journey to Whitehall and the executioner's block. Here were married George IV. and Queen Caroline; and, coming down to our own times, here it was our beloved Queen was both confirmed and married (the fittings and decorations of the palace and chapel for the latter occasion costing

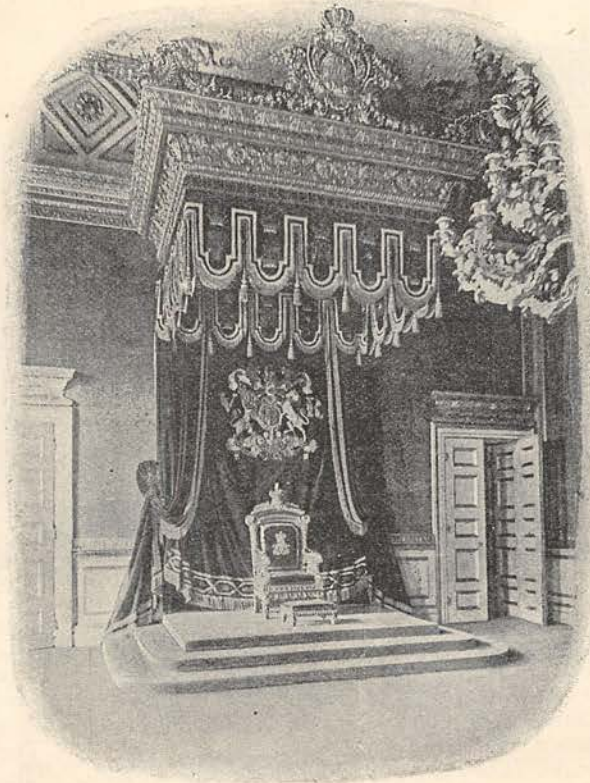
£9,000). Later on, the Princess Royal and Crown Prince of Prussia were also married here; and at a still more recent date the marriage ceremony of His Royal Highness the Duke of York, and Her Serene Highness the Princess May was performed.

Various monarchs have been in the habit of attending the services here when in town; just lately, I was reading an old historian of the time of George III. who made special mention of it. "The King attended the Royal Chapel every Sunday morning in state; but so long was the service, and so devout was he, that the Queen and family were in the habit of dropping off one by one, leaving the King, the parson, and his Majesty's equerry to freeze it out together."

Certain it is that not all the attendants were so devout as the King, for the same historian goes on to tell how a celebrated duchess and her daughter, coming hither one Sunday, found the chapel quite full—not a seat to be had! Look-

ing round and finding the case hopeless, the duchess somewhat audibly observed—"Come away, Louisa; at any rate we have done the *civil* thing!"

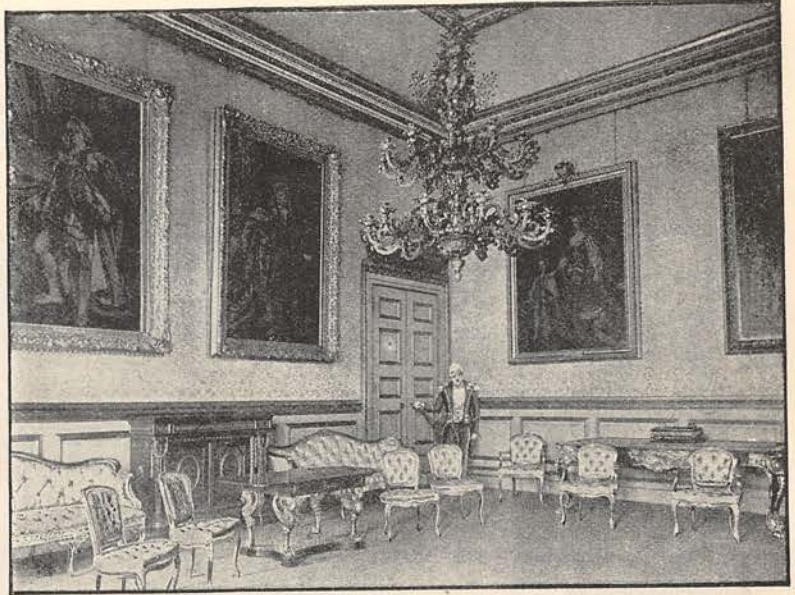
Prior to the erection of the private chapel at Buckingham Palace, the Queen, Prince Consort, and the Court also attended here when in London. As is fairly well known, the Bishop of London is Dean of the Chapels Royal, the Sub-Dean being the Rev. Edgar Sheppard. Some forty-eight Chaplains-in-Ordinary are also appointed, whose office is almost a sinecure, their services only being called into requisition for one Sunday service per year. At the same time, the appointment is generally considered a stepping-stone to



THE THRONE.

something better. At one time, dinner was laid daily in the palace for the chaplains. This has long been obsolete; but I remember hearing of an amusing incident connected with the custom, which happened during the reign of Charles II. A report of the discontinuance of this daily dinner was in circulation, when one day the King chanced to honour the chaplains with his presence. It was the witty Dr. South's turn to say the usual grace—"God save the King and bless our dinner," but, mindful of the rumour, he quickly substituted, "God bless the King and save our dinner," to the amusement of the King and the consternation of the company. However, I believe the dinner was saved—at any rate, for the time being.

The interior of the chapel is oblong in shape, with a roof divided into small painted squares, termed panelled renaissance, showing Tudor emblems and mottoes. The H. and A.



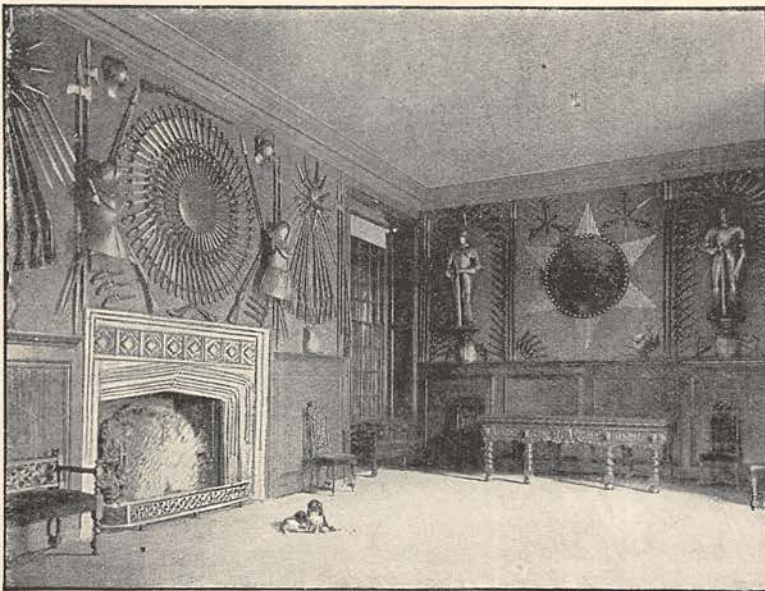
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

which are evident, are by some supposed to refer to Anne Boleyn, and by some to Anne of Cleves; at any rate, the date inscribed is 1540. The entire decoration was designed by Hans Holbein.

The hangings and upholstery of the chapel are all crimson, the seats of oak. The services are open to the public; but the accommodation for such is extremely limited—

consisting of one small gallery only—admission to which is by an order from the Lord Chamberlain. With this exception, the entire building (which is very small) is occupied by the Royal Family, great officers of State, and the household, peers and peeresses, and guards, even the Bishop of London having only one seat at his disposal.

Very superb and antique-looking is the so-called Queen Anne plate, bearing date 1660 and "A. R.," which seems to have been altered from "C. R." This the Sub-Dean most kindly ordered to be placed

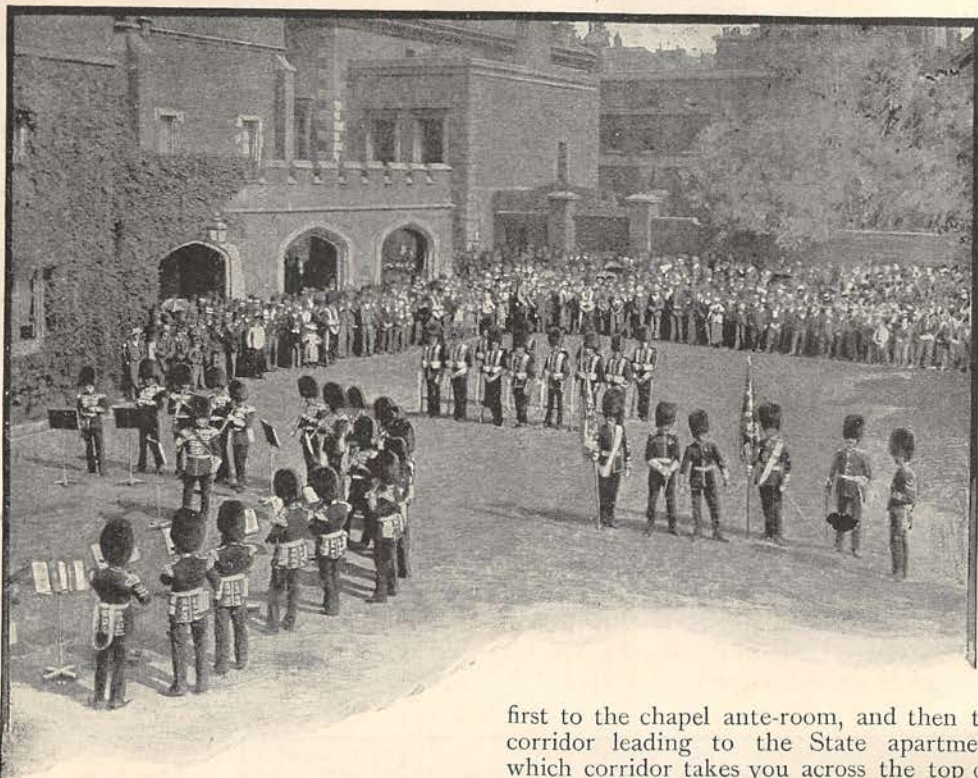


THE GUARD ROOM.

in the Chapel in order that I might include it in a photograph of the interior. It is indeed only a portion of a quantity of the most valuable church plate to be met with; but to attempt any description here would be useless, as anything at all adequate would demand considerable space. The choir, known as the

small chairs have crimson velvet seats and over-burnished frames, four arm-chairs having frames in white and gold, with crimson brocaded seats and backs. Immediately beneath are the single seat pews of the Lord Bishop and the Lord Chamberlain.

Stepping out of this Royal pew, you come



MOUNTING "QUEEN'S GUARD."

"Gentlemen and children of the Chapel Royal," sit in stalls on either side of the Chapel, the organ being in a gallery on the left. Needless to say, the singing here is a very special feature—always, in fact, perfection. The dress of the boys is picturesque in the extreme, the scarlet and gold of their long coats, and the Elizabethan ruffles at neck and wrists giving them a quaint and old-world appearance. These choristers assist at State concerts at Buckingham Palace; and a fact worth recording respecting them is that they performed the first oratorio ever heard in England, namely, Handel's "Esther" in 1731.

The Royal pew is a gallery at the rear of the chapel immediately facing the altar; it is hung with crimson velvet curtains with gold embroidery, the foot-stools are covered to match. The lower front of the pew is faced with crimson silk curtains behind pillars, some

first to the chapel ante-room, and then to a corridor leading to the State apartments, which corridor takes you across the top of a double staircase.

The first room seen is on the left, and is known as the Guard Room. Its walls are in deep terra-cotta, with a high dado of green. All around these walls are arrangements of armour, offensive and defensive. The chimney-piece is antique carved stone, the furniture is of heavy carved oak, with upholstery in crimson brocaded velvet. When Drawing Rooms were held at St. James's, the Yeomen of the Guard on duty assembled in this room. It is many years now since such a function took place within these walls, I believe not since 1865. Buckingham Palace—which has since been used for the purpose—is much more adapted for it, having a greater number of State apartments, most of which are also much larger.

Coming from the Guard Room, the first one of a continuous suite which is entered is the Armoury. This has its ceiling papered in gold and white, the decorations of the room being entirely of Henry VIII. period. The

collection of armour is here very fine, showing daggers, swords, muskets, in the form of stars, circles, vandyke borders, and other designs, including also two or three complete suits. The upper part of the walls is painted in deep terra-cotta, the continuation being a dado of green, red, and gold; the furniture is carved oak with upholstery of crimson, and settees in crimson silk and gold frames. The curtains are crimson cloth with borders of Royal blue. The carpet, woven in one piece, is of green, gold, and white.

Now we come to the Tapestry Room, one of the most historical rooms of the palace, being, I believe, the only one which in its entirety is part of the old palace as built by Henry VIII. It was formerly known as the Presence Chamber, but has for some considerable period derived its name from the very fine tapestry with which the walls are covered. This is an exquisite specimen of work, and is representative of the "Amours" of Venus and Mars. Historians seem to differ as to the period of its manufacture; one says it was specially made for Charles I., another assigns it to Charles II.; I should incline to the latter from the fact of the two C's beneath the crown appearing in the bordering. Which-

ever monarch it was made for, however, it was at a considerably later period when it was hung, for, from some unaccountable cause, it was hidden away, and not discovered until 1795, when it was found in an old chest, and put up for the marriage of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV. The mantel-piece in the room is a genuine Henry VIII. In the small squares surrounding it may be seen the "H.A.," the fleur-de-lis of France, the port-cullis of Westminster, rose of



THE ROYAL PEW IN THE CHAPEL ROYAL.

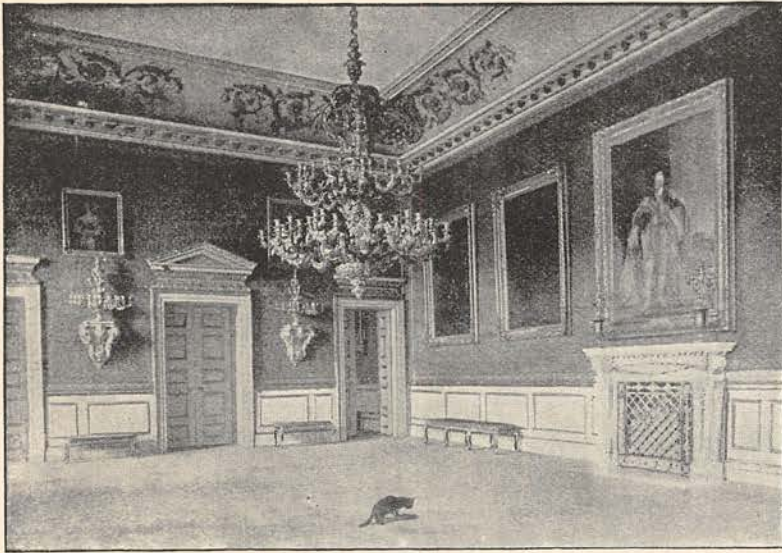
Lancaster, and the true lover's knot which Henry was then so fond of, but which he had no compunction in severing with an axe about four years later. Some of the mural decorations are of quite modern date, as about eight or nine years ago the State rooms were re-decorated. But I may here say that nearly the whole of the fine cornice and beading to be seen in these apartments was from designs of Sir Christopher Wren.

In this room the cards are received of those who are attending the Levees, for these are still held in St. James's Palace, as most people are aware. From the window of this room the accession of a monarch is proclaimed, and it was here so many years ago that our Queen stood and looked out on the surging, cheering crowd who had assembled to listen to the proclamation of her accession. The curtains are crimson felt, settees and chairs are covered in crimson silk and have carved gold frames; from the papered ceiling hangs a very handsome ormolu chandelier.

Here one has a splendid view of the daily imposing military ceremony known as "Mounting Queen's Guard," when flags are exchanged, and keys handed over, while the finest of music is discoursed by the band.



MARSHALMAN RAYNER.

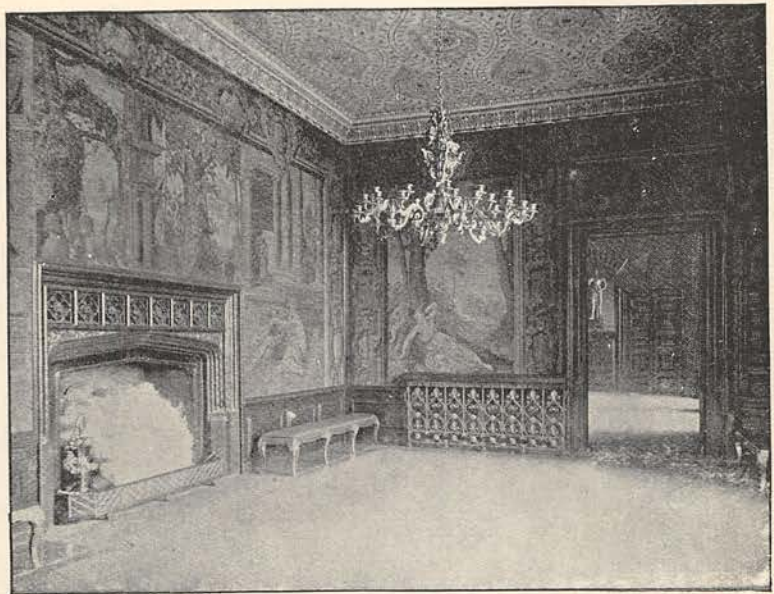


THE ENTRÉE ROOM.

An interesting figure in this ceremony is the Marshalman, who, with his staff of office keeps clear ground for the ceremony. He is one of eight who take turns on the parade ground. They are all of them old servants of Her Majesty, and hold this office as a reward for faithful performance of duties; two of them may be always seen at the House of Lords when that House is sitting; they, in fact, hold the important position of representatives of the Royal dignity. Their dress is picturesque and quaint: originally introduced long ago, it has existed without alteration until this day. I had a little conversation with Marshalman Rayner, the one present on this occasion. He told me he had been servant to the Queen for fifty-four years—was, in fact, in the Royal Household prior to the birth of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. He wears two medals—the Jubilee, and the Long Service. He is a well-known figure, too, and a great favourite in the Royal Household.

there are also six large candelabra of the same material. Several magnificent pier glasses, which come from the roof to the side tables, add much to the effect. The very handsome marble mantelpiece in grey and white, supported by Caryatides, is of George I. period. On the walls are several portraits of former Kings and Queens. George I. is after Vandyck, George II. by Sir Joshua Reynolds. It was in this chamber that Frederick Duke of York laid in State in 1827, and I may here

Queen Anne's drawing-room is a fine spacious apartment, beautifully decorated, the walls being hung in gold brocaded satin with a wainscot of white and gold, the doors and window recesses being painted in the same manner. The furniture and curtains are also gold brocade, giving the room a very rich appearance. The ceiling is of the concave order, with floral painting and gold carving. The ormolu chandelier is very massive, and



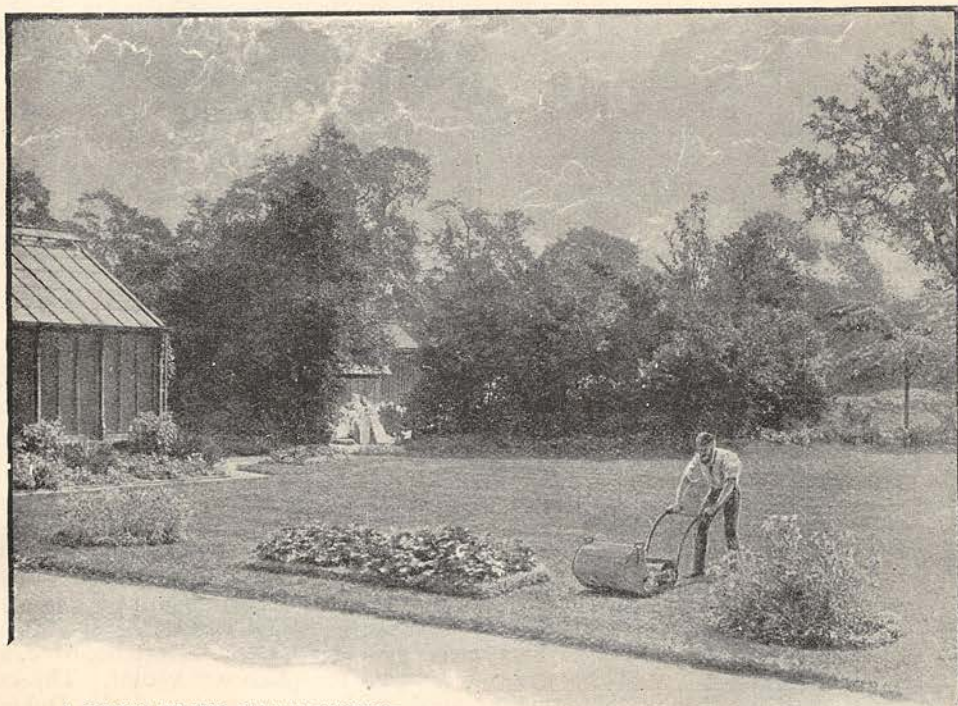
THE TAPESTRY ROOM.

say that in this palace also died Queen Mary, two children of Charles I., Queen Caroline—wife of George II., the Princess Elizabeth—daughter of the Duke and Duchess of Clarence, and other celebrities.

Although the palace has only now and again been the residence of the reigning monarch, some have also been born here, amongst which may be mentioned Charles II. and George IV.

Charles I. in 1628 gave up the palace as

painted and decorated in green and gold—the prevailing colour used in the room is crimson—walls, settees, curtains, and furniture, being brocade of that colour. Here are also some fine plate-glass mirrors, and a handsome ormolu chandelier. The candelabra are French, having fine lily branch lights of ormolu and bronze of Louis XVI. period. Then there are some porphyry vases with ormolu mounts of the same period; these latter standing on side tables with marble



A CORNER OF THE PALACE GARDENS.

a residence for Marie de Medici, his mother-in-law, thereby incurring much unpopularity, her presence being so obnoxious to the people that at last Parliament voted her some £10,000 if she would leave the country. She went to Cologne, which was a free city, and is reported to have died there in a garret only one year after, with scarcely the bare necessaries of life. Here Charles took the last farewell of his children (who had been fetched hither for the purpose) on the morning of his execution. But to proceed through the apartments. We come next to the Entrée Room, formerly known as the Great Council Chamber; here it was customary in the last century to sing and perform the Birthday and Accession Odes of the Poet Laureate. The ceiling of this apartment is

tops, the centre table showing a very costly time-piece by Vulliamy. King William IV. is the central painting on the walls, and Admirals Nelson, Barrington, Rodney, and Lord St. Vincent are ranged around, together with two or three portraits, the originals of which do not seem to be known. We come now to the Throne Room, or Presence Chamber. Here the Queen formerly held the Drawing Rooms, Her Majesty's first one being held one month after her accession. To go back to the time of the first function of this sort taking place at St. James's Palace is to go back to the time of Queen Anne; but they seem to have been very informal affairs, generally with a very small attendance, as one historian records the fact of his presence when there were only about twenty

people there. Our Queen was presented here to Queen Adelaide, when she herself was only twelve years of age. The Prince of Wales now receives here the attendants of the Levees.

Of course, the principal interest is centred on the Throne itself. It has a magnificent canopy, which was made after the union of Ireland with Great Britain; it consists of crimson velvet with embroidered crowns set with fine pearls, bordered by costly fringe, the whole supported with a framework of massive gold carving, on the summit the crown and V. R. The outer portion of the canopy has embroidery in the same character, and shows the crown, rose, shamrock and thistle, harp, lion, and V. R. The chair is of massive gold framework, surmounted by the crown, the crimson velvet back being embellished with the crown and letters done in the same costly manner as the canopy. This Throne was used at the opening of the Royal Courts of Justice by Her Majesty in 1882, and that I believe was the only occasion when it has been used apart from the State ceremonies at the palace.

By the doorways on either side we enter direct into the Council Room or Royal Closet, this being the actual Cabinet of St. James's. Here the Queen formerly gave audiences to Ambassadors, and here it was customary for her Majesty to receive an annual address of congratulation from a deputation of Church clergy. The decorations are very fine, showing a gold relief of fruit and leaves, and a covering of blue brocaded satin to walls and furniture. The white marble mantel has over it an immense pier glass set in massive gold carving, while facing it is a French timepiece of marble and ormolu, with cameos inserted in the front. Over at one side of the room stands a most costly cabinet of ebony and platinum, and in another part is one of very handsome tulip-wood and gold inlay, having massive mounts and decorations; on the latter is a Vulliamy timepiece in ebony and ormolu, and behind it a large and handsome mirror.

Of the Picture Gallery little can be said, unless I were to indulge in a descriptive catalogue of paintings, for the walls are literally covered with portraits of former Kings and Queens of England. The apartment itself is eminently an old-world one; the settees, the curtains, and the narrow marble mantelpiece, have the appearance of days gone by. The prevailing tone is a crushed strawberry, door lintels, recesses, and dado showing a painting of bronze green.

The Banqueting Hall is of large dimensions, some 63 feet long and 30 feet

wide. It was constructed by George IV. in 1822, no dining hall of adequate size being previously in use at the palace. The decorations are in Louis XIV. style; the ceiling is gold and cream, with sunk shafts for light and ventilation, and carved and gilded cornices, the frieze showing the "G. R." with crown and motto surmounts. The walls are covered in green, gold, and crimson, with a wainscot continuation of mahogany and gold. The gold-framed settees are upholstered in crimson. Around the room may be seen a number of large oil-paintings, some representative of battles, and some portraits: chief of the latter may be mentioned Charles II., by Sir Godfrey Kneller; and William, Prince of Orange, by William Wissing.

These are the whole of the State rooms—a small number for so large a palace; but it must be remembered that Clarence House and York House are each of them part of the building. Clarence House was formerly the residence of the Duchess of Kent, afterwards being placed at the disposal of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, and for him considerably enlarged and greatly improved. It is still the London residence of the Duke, who is now the reigning Sovereign of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha.

In York House formerly lived the ex-King of Hanover; he was succeeded by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge, who died here some years ago. The apartments were vacant for a time, and were then placed at the disposal of his late Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence and Avondale by her Majesty; but almost as soon as the preparations were commenced for the refitting, the melancholy death of the Prince occurred, and once again the place was vacant. This continued until the marriage of the Duke of York and Princess May; York House then becoming the town residence of their Royal Highnesses.

An opportunity is afforded me of seeing the historical garden of St. James's Palace. This is of no great size, but beautifully shaded and secluded. Here is the entrance always used by Royalty, and many of the State apartments have an outlook in this direction; also the best view of Clarence House is obtained from here. Up at one end is the studio formerly used by the late Prince Victor of Hohenlohe, and now used by his daughter, who is also remarkably gifted in sculpture.

To walk round the courts of the Palace takes up some considerable time; each one is famous for something. The Ambassadors' Court is one of the larger ones; it is so named from the entrance there situated which is available for ambassadors and ministers only



THE PRINCE OF WALES'S LEVEE AT ST. JAMES'S PALACE.

who are attending the Court Levees. The ordinary attendants of these levees have entrance under the colonnade opposite Marlborough House. York House takes nearly the whole of one side of the Ambassadors' Court, and continuing round you come to the Lord Chamberlain's office, a place where more business is transacted than any uninitiated personages may be aware of: for the duties of the Lord Chamberlain are so numerous and so far-reaching that to recapitulate them would fill a fair-sized volume. Returning by York House, and so on into Engine Court—thus passing the Guard Room and the old kitchens of the palace—we wend our way round to Friary Court, the scene of the Mounting Queen's Guard which we watched from the window of the Tapestry Room.

On this site there was formerly a Friary of Capuchin priests, who came into England with Catherine of Braganza on her marriage with Charles II. These priests seem to have been so numerous, and to have created so much dislike, that, according to history, the King one day gave orders to the Yeomen of the Guard to drive them out, and also to clear the place of the numerous French people whom the Queen had about her. On this we are told "the Queen became so angry that she broke the glass windows with her fist." Of course, at that time the building had a very different aspect, and much more space was occupied then in this direction than is now. The German Chapel, for instance, was

formerly connected with the palace buildings instead of with Marlborough House. This chapel was founded by Queen Anne. Its beautiful altar-piece of "Christ in Gethsemane," by Remberg, was presented by Queen Caroline, as was also its organ. The altar itself is somewhat plain, is covered in red, and bears on it a gold plate and two gold candlesticks. The Royal pew is a gallery facing the altar; the ambassadors' pew being another small gallery on the right. It was long the wish of her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales that a Danish service should be held here; accordingly this was initiated at the commencement of the year 1881. The choir of the chapel is small and good, but voluntary. Both the German and the Danish services are comparatively plain, when considered by the side of those of our own Church. The Dowager Queen Adelaide attended here habitually, as did also her late Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent when residing at Clarence House.

The Palace of St. James's is one of the most valuable relics of old London, but its interior is very little known to the public; and therefore I trust that the opportunity graciously afforded for the preparation of a magazine article may be as much appreciated by the readers as it was by the writer.

Who, on looking back upon the happy and prosperous reign of Queen Victoria, will not join me in the wish that she may long be spared as Sovereign of "Our Court of St. James's"?



THE GARDEN FRONT.