

power of Gainsborough as a portrait painter; but we humbly submit that his merits as a figure painter greatly transcended his powers in landscape. The nature, as he showed it in the latter department of his art, was superseded by manner, and there was by no means the earnestness and point which we now look for in landscape art; but in his female and youthful figures there was a refinement and a sweetness to which Reynolds never attained. The *suave* and elegant examples of Gainsborough, which were to be seen at the Manchester Exhibition, differed essentially from the full-blown beauty of Reynolds's works; they were endowed with a sentiment and a delicacy which have been rarely equalled—never surpassed.*

WINDSOR,

AND ITS HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS.†

No country can boast a nobler home for its Sovereign than England—none has more ancient memories—none more regal bearing than “proud Windsor.” Yet its history has hitherto been briefly or badly narrated; and the theme, though tempting, has met with surprising neglect. It was reserved for Messrs. Tighe and Davis to effect this much-required labour; and the two goodly volumes they have produced are works that must do them honour, and cannot fail to be accepted with pleasure by our most gracious Queen, to whom they are dedicated; not simply as a work well done, but also as an example of the zeal and public spirit that is enterprising enough to do this by private resource alone, for we believe in no other country would such books be produced unaided by government grants.

The history of Windsor Castle is essentially the history of the private lives of many of England's monarchs. Its foundation is owing to William the Conqueror, before whose time Windsor, though occasionally a royal residence, was not the castellated hill, which now bears the name, but the village still called Old Windsor some two miles to the north-west of it. A few serfs and swineherds dwelt in straggling huts near that old palace or manor-house of the Saxon kings, tending swine in the woods, which, stretching southwards and westwards, formed the outskirts of the Royal Forest of Windsor. At the time of the erection of the castle by William, there does not appear to have been any town or village where the present town of Windsor stands. It must have gradually arisen under the walls of the castle, partly from the convenience or necessity of having residences in the vicinity for persons connected with the court, and also for the sale of wares to the attendants. The first direct mention of Windsor as a residence of the Conqueror is in the year 1070, when a passage in the chronicles of Roger de Hoveden notes the gift of archbishoprics made by the king while there. The earliest mention of the castle as a state prison is in the succeeding reign, when the Earl of Northumberland was incarcerated there in A.D. 1095. In the ensuing reigns we meet with continued reference to courtly feasts at the castle. Its aspect was changed and greatly improved by Henry III.; than whom, say our authors, “perhaps no English sovereign ever paid so much attention to painting, sculpture, and architecture.” The glories of its history begin in the reign of Edward I., who held a splendid tournament in the park in 1307, of which our authors furnish the items for dress and decoration of the *preux chevaliers* who crowded to exhibit their prowess; but its greatest days of chivalric glory occurred in the reign of the sumptuous third Edward, who, in imitation of King Arthur, the imaginary founder of British chivalry, determined to hold a round table or assembly of knights at Windsor, which should be open to all noble comers; and which brought together a brilliant assemblage of English and foreign chivalry, and many high-born dames, in the January of 1344. This feast, for which letters of safe-conduct were granted, and all royal protection given

to foreign knights and their servants on the journey, was so great a success, and brought the king so much glory in an age devoted to feats of arms, that it was repeated in 1345, and again when the monarch returned from Cressy. About that time we first meet with a notice of the existence of a badge or device of the garter. It incidentally occurs in wardrobe accounts towards the end of 1347, or

beginning of 1348, when we find sums expended “for making a bed of blue taffeta for the king, powdered with garters, containing this motto, *honi soit qui mal y pense*,” and “for making twelve blue garters embroidered with gold and silk,” each having the same motto.

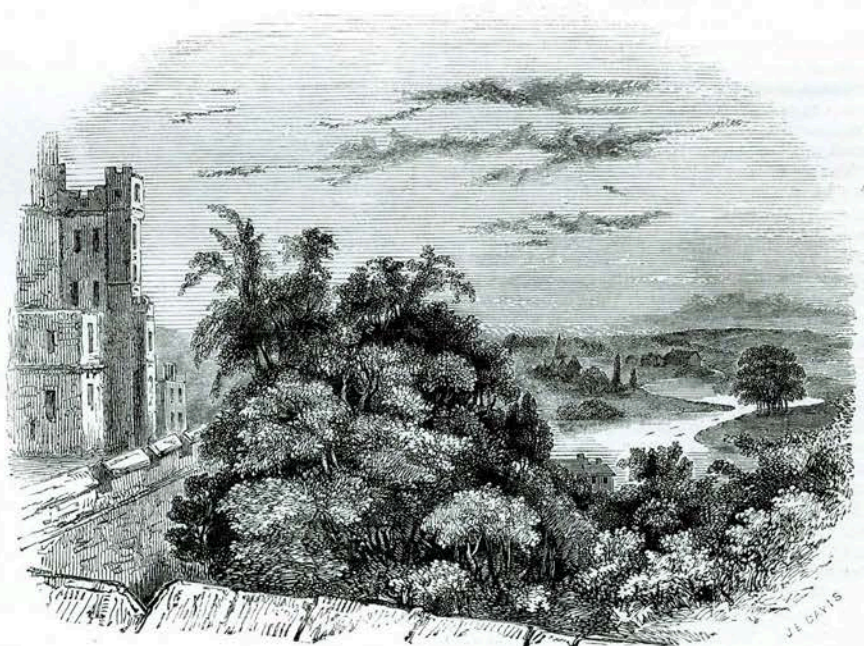
Our authors have gone carefully into the history of this famous order and its badge, and their re-



WINDSOR IN THE REIGN OF GEORGE II.

searches lead them to the conclusion, that the old popular story of the garter being adopted from one taken up by the king, after it was dropped by a noble lady (some writers stating her to be the Queen, others the Countess of Salisbury, and others the Countess of Kent), is fully in accordance with the tastes and habits of the age, and “very likely to have occurred.” The same opinion was held by

Sir Harris Nicolas, an antiquary by no means of a romantic or fanciful mind. We cannot fairly judge of the idiosyncracies of any age by our own; and the whimsical fantasies of knight-errantry, puerile as they may seem in this modern “work-a-day world,” were obeyed as cheerfully in the middle ages as if they had been the decrees of a Solon. This badge, and all its associations, might then be



WINCHESTER TOWER, WINDSOR CASTLE.

regarded with a romantic feeling of which posterity can form no adequate conception.

Under Edward III. the castle was enlarged nearly to its present extent; it was a regal home worthy of the British sovereigns; and the pages of our authors abound in brilliant details of feasts and pageantry held at Christmas, tournaments, or great public ceremonials. Our authors have de-

voted one most interesting chapter to a disquisition on the early romances and metrical tales and ballads connected with Windsor,—a chapter we would linger long and willingly over; for “we love a ballad in print” as well as did the country girl in Shakspeare's immortal play. There is one here of King Edward and the Shepherd, which must have been an especial favourite with our ancestors—it is

* To be continued.

† ANNALS OF WINDSOR: being a History of the Castle and Town, with some account of Eton and places adjacent. By R. R. Tighe and J. E. Davis, Esqrs. Published by Longman and Co.

so fresh and full of jollity, and affords such excellent pictures of court and country life, in the olden time before us.

During the reign of Henry VI. Eton College was founded, and the events connected therewith are all faithfully chronicled by our historians. They give a charming view of the old chapel there, as seen from the Brocas Elms in Clewer meadows, which we transfer to our pages. This Brocas meadow, so well known as the playing-ground of the scholars of Eton, it may be worth noting, takes its name from the ancient owner of the land, the famed Sir Bernard Brocas, who was beheaded at the commencement of the reign of Henry IV., and died possessed of much land in this county.

We cannot give more than a slight idea of the vast amount of historic research, and the resulting accumulation of curious facts, contained in these portly volumes: suffice it to say that the rise, growth, decay, and resuscitation of Windsor Castle, are given with great perspicuity and most scrupulous accuracy. The labour necessary to produce such volumes is what few persons, even among the literary, can form a notion of. These researches in our authors' hands have the merit of not being dry—a quality not very frequent in works of their class. One chapter is devoted to a subject in which all who read the works of England's master-poet—and that includes not Englishmen alone—must feel the greatest interest: it consists of such "local illustrations" of Shakspeare's "Merry Wives of Windsor," as enable us to realize in "the mind's eye" the action of the great drama with a vivid truth unknown before. With the aid of Mr. Fairholt's excellent copy of Hocfnagle's large view of the castle, 1575, and his picture of Datchet Mead from the Sutherland Collection, together with the various woodcuts scattered over the text, we again see the Windsor of the days of Elizabeth. The researches of our authors have enabled us to fix the site, by giving us a contemporary drawing, of the inn of "mine host of the Garter," showing that it joined the present White Hart Inn, facing the castle hill; and that there was a family of the name of Ford living at Windsor. The spot in Datchet Mead where Falstaff got his unsavoury ducking is pointed out as a ditch or creek, known as "Hog-hole," which afterwards was converted into an arched drain, and ultimately destroyed by the embankment raised to form the approach to the new Victoria Bridge. We may point to the lengthened examination of the history of Herne's Oak, and its excellent woodcuts, as a specimen of a painstaking discrimination, that, we think, for ever settles the disputed point of the destruction of the tree, which happened about the year 1796, in consequence of a sweeping order given to clear the park of old timber, a command much regretted by George III. when he found this tree among the number.

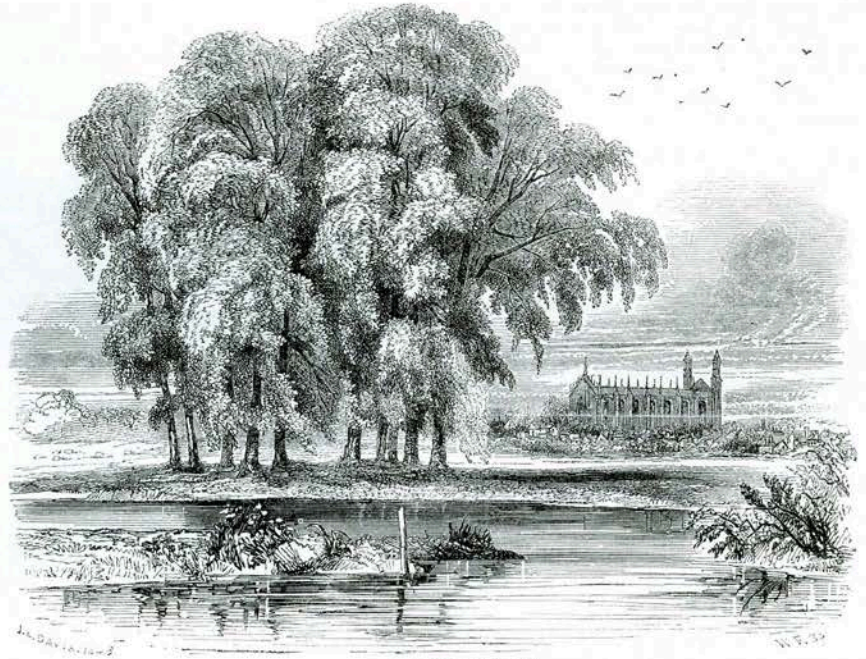
The appearance of the castle in the previous reign may be seen in one of the cuts we borrow from these volumes; it wanted dignity, and it lost its castellated grandeur. The enormous works undertaken here by Sir Jeffrey Wyattville for George IV. restored its royal stateliness; still, had they been effected now, there is little doubt the nation would have been the gainer, inasmuch as the true principles of mediæval architecture are much better understood; and tastes would not have been offended as they now are with much that is merely "Strawberry-hill Gothic"—that is, Gothic only in name. Happily the great external features of the building are good; and we may again repeat that a more regal residence does not exist in the world, combining as it does external majesty with grandeur of situation.

But it is not to the town and castle alone, or even to Eton's "learned shade" and its many associations, that the research which constitutes the value of the present volumes is confined. The neighbourhood abounds with local history, which has been carefully gleaned, and finds a proper resting-place in these pages. We have already noted what has been done to fix the Shaksperian localities; the same good office has been effected for those to which the muse of Gray has given an undying fame; the church of Stoke Pogis, the "ivy-mantled tower" at Upton, the old churches at Clewer, Bray, &c., have all a share of attention. A large amount of general county history may be gleaned from these volumes, as well as much curious information of "the old time before us."

A vivid picture, full of the lights and shadows of

English history, is this narrative of our Sovereign's home; much is there in it to please the lovers of the romantic era in the middle ages,—much to instruct, perhaps to sadden, the thoughtful student who reads the "levelling" narrative of the great civil war. The succeeding ages, though perhaps of unpoetic tendencies, are not without their noble moral; for throughout the confusion of party poli-

tics we can still find the strong bias toward the wholesome and well-defined liberty so dearly won at last, and enjoyed by every grade in its proper station, which is yet the proud privilege of Englishmen to boast. The battle of peace, begun at Runnymede, was fought through many generations; but the innate love of liberty, which is so strong a feature in the British character, was bequeathed from



ETON, FROM CLEWER MEADOWS.

one generation to another, and, persevering in its legitimate demands, won at last the victory of freedom.

The chapter on Runnymede and its memories is one that is full of interesting details, well worthy as attentive a study from the reader as it has received from the authors. British greatness was established on that field of undying memory.

Not the least curious part of these volumes are the reproductions in fac-simile as regards size, colour, and general effect, of the ancient maps and plans of Windsor, and the older views of the castle and its neighbourhood. They are admirable as copies, and all that the most fastidious antiquary could desire for accuracy. The volume is further illustrated with many wood-engravings, preserving views of



UPTON CHURCH.

ancient buildings now destroyed, or picturesque bits still in existence. We are enabled to give four specimens of these cuts in our pages, from which our readers may judge of their merits. Throughout their labours the authors seem to have been cognizant of the importance of the task they had so cheerfully imposed on themselves, and to have been determined to complete it, regardless of any other

consideration than the attainment of excellence. Their labours cannot fail of due appreciation, and will long make their name remembered. They could have no better monument than these volumes, which are all the more welcome in these days of ephemeral literature, and a wholesome proof that there are students among us, still labouring diligently as ever, in the fields of English history.