Some Royal Chapels in the Lower Ward of Windsor Castle.

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THERE appear to have been at least four Chapels within the Lower Ward of Windsor Castle, portions of three of which still remain. Only about the first is there any mystery and it is to be feared that its story will always remain hidden. It must be remembered that the Castle when built by the Conqueror consisted, firstly, of a palisaded Keep upon a Mound which was surrounded by a dry moat, and, secondly, of an area corresponding with the Lower Ward which was also surrounded by palisades and moat. Probably, the area now represented by the Upper Ward was defended in the same way. Only along the north face where the chalk cliff gave sufficient defence was there no moat.

In the year 1107 King Henry I began to rebuild the Castle and in 1110 he kept his Court at Windsor for the first time. At about this date a Great Hall existed here and near it was a Chapel in which the King married his second queen, Adeliza of Louvaine, on 24 January, 1121. According to one authority the Chapel was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to another to Edward the Confessor. Probably, it was dedicated to both. A number of priests were appointed to officiate in it, five at first and eight more afterwards. In later years when the Great Hall was an imposing structure of stone, it was situated between the Well—which is now to the north of the Nave of St. George's Chapel—and the north wall of the Lower Ward. It is probable that the earliest Great Hall stood on the same site and that the Chapel stood to the east of it; possibly, with its Chancel covering the site of the present Vestry. The fact that this side of the Cloister is so different from the others is evidence in favour of this suggestion. If this were the case the old Chapel came as far east as the position of the west side of the 'cloister and grass-plat' of the Chapel that was built by Henry III, and the site of the Vestry has been consecrated ground for over eight hundred years.

We now pass to the beautiful Chapel that was built by Henry III in 1240. Quite early in his reign the young King began building towers on the south and west sides of the Castle. Up to the year 1227 the original palisading on top of chalk earthworks was all the defence the Castle possessed on the west and at about that date the Curfew, Garter and Salisbury Towers, with their curtain walls were built. These being completed the King determined to build apartments for his own and for the Queen's use, and also a Chapel in the finest Early English style which was then the fashion. This latter was to be 70 feet long by 28 feet wide, and a sufficient space was to be left between these apartments and the Chapel to make a grass-plat. The Chapel was to have a galilee, or porch, a cloister and a bell-tower, the latter to be "in front" of the Chapel, to be of stone and of a size to hold three or four bells. The interior of the Chapel which now stands on this site is the same width and only 6 feet longer, which extra length is probably caused by the eastern apse being added later. The galilee probably covered part of the passage way at the west which is still approached by a doorway in the most western of the original arches in the cloister. If the eastern apse was included in the original Chapel the western wall must have been 6 feet farther east than the present one, and in that case the doorway would have been in the centre of the porch or galilee instead of being at the north-eastern corner of it, as it is now. The cloister remains on the same site as originally built; the south wall having five arches with Purbeck columns and floriated capitals. The north wall is plain and pierced by a fourteenth century doorway, while the west wall is of mixed material and shows signs of once having contained a number of small openings. The east wall is of later workmanship with fine perpendicular doorways and windows. Around the whole is the stone seat for the use of the old who "go to the wall," but which has evidently been used also by the young for playing the game of nine-holes. The 'grass-plat' was once surrounded by very beautiful open arches, but now only the four corners remain as originally built. The present arches are modern. The 'bell-tower' remains to be mentioned. Where was it? Some have

suggested the Curfew Tower, but that was built earlier. Some have said that it might have been the 'Governor's Tower,' but that is definitely Edwardian. One evident place remains and this the writer suggests as being the site and to some extent the remains of the Belfry. It is the corner—now No. 19—of the Military Knights Houses. It stood on the south bank of the moat which divided the Lower Ward from the Middle Ward: the outer corner of it still exists as quoin stones which are quite different from any others in the Castle. It would extend from this corner until it met the great south wall of the Lower Ward, by which it would be amply supported. What more probable than that as the Chapel itself extended to the portion of the moat now known as the Deanery Garden on the north side of the approach to the Castle so its Belfry which was to be 'in front' of it would also stand against the same moat on the south side of the approach?

The records show that the interior of the Chapel was profusely decorated. Brother William, the monk of Westminster, supervised the painting of scenes from the Old and New Testaments, three altars were provided, four images were made and painted, and several books of the Sarum use were purchased and handed over to the Chaplains. In addition to all this, a large silver-gilt figure of the Blessed Virgin Mary was supplied and later on a companion was made of St. George in carved wood. In the year 1283 the treasure called the Crux Gneyth was deposited there also. This was specially valued, not only because it was believed to contain a portion of the True Cross, but also because of its great intrinsic value in gold and precious stones.

Such, then, was the first condition of the earliest Royal Chapel of which we have any definite record. Portions of it remain until now—nearly 700 years afterwards—to give us some idea of its beauty.

In the course of the fourteenth century great events occurred in this Chapel. On 26th November, 1312—when only three days old—Prince Edward of Windsor was christened here and when he became King he made important changes both in the building and in the ceremonies that were held here. This is not the opportunity to give an account of the foundation of the Order

of the Garter; suffice it to say that having chosen twenty-five of his greatest knights he made them into one noble Order with himself as Sovereign, and chose this Chapel as the centre of their solemnities. He further appointed a number of old warriors to represent them at the daily services here. These two bodies of valiant men are still known: the one as Companions of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, and the other as the Military Knights of Windsor. He further altered the dedication of the Chapel from being to the Blessed Virgin Mary and King Edward the Confessor to these and also St. George. To make it more suitable for the new honour given to it it was provided with stalls for the Knights and with painted windows. The roof also was repaired and the tall square tower on the south side of the Lower Ward was erected as a belfry. A magnificent reredos of alabaster was fitted above the high altar and the new belfry was provided with new bells. During the remainder of the reign of King Edward many important ceremonies were enacted here—some connected with the Order of the Garter, some with the Royal family, some associated with the names of foreign Sovereigns—all of which must be passed over. Notwithstanding all the expenditure by King Edward the roof was in a bad state in the days of Richard II, to superintend the repairs of which Geoffrey Chaucer, the poet, was employed. He seems to have made all well again and we do not read of any important repairs all through Lancastrian and Yorkist days.

The Chapel of Henry VII standing upon the same site and, indeed, the same building as regards the north wall, should be mentioned now.

The circumstance that the body of Henry VI had been laid in the south aisle of the Choir of the new Chapel attracted great numbers of pilgrims, the offerings of whom were considerable. King Henry VII was desirous of giving his uncle a more suitable place of sepulture and also of being himself buried here. He, accordingly, pulled down the whole of the Chapel of Henry III with all the alterations as carried out by Edward III, with the exception of the north wall, and built another Chapel upon the site. Externally, it is harmonious in design with St. George's

Chapel, though without any side aisles. It is built of six bays with apse at the east end in form of three sides of an octagon. Strong buttresses support the walls, the lower portion of it is decorated with crowned port-cullises with griffins and greyhounds as supporters. The windows are fine specimens of late perpendicular work.

When the Chapel was ready for the body of Henry VI to be removed into it, considerable opposition was raised to this. The Abbot and Monks of Chertsey wanted it to be returned to them, the Monks of Westminster claimed that as King he should be buried among his ancestors there, while Henry had gone to the trouble of altering the Chapel at Windsor for him. In the end, the King decided that not only should his uncle be removed to Westminster, but also that he would build a new Chapel for himself at Westminster. This latter scheme was carried into effect ; we know the magnificent Chapel that he built. As it happened, the body of Henry VI was never removed from St. George's Chapel, for the bones were found there in the year 1910.

This is not the time or place to go into the details of this Chapel's history. At various times arrangements were made at great expense for the interment here of Cardinal Wolsey, Henry VIII and Charles I, but all came to nought. It was used occasionally as an ante-Chapel to St. George's and not until the early nineteenth century was it used as a tomb-house. Then George III had a vault excavated beneath it and since then many members of the Royal Family have been interred there. Shortly after the death of the Prince Consort in 1861 Queen Victoria decided to have the Chapel decorated as a Memorial to her late husband. This was carried out in a magnificent manner and, consequently, was called ' The Albert Memorial Chapel.' Since then the bodies of the Duke of Clarence—elder son of King Edward and Queen Alexandra—and of the Duke of Albany—youngest son of Queen Victoria—were each placed within a sarcophagus in it. Such is the present use of the Chapel in the Lower Ward, the north wall of which was built in the reign of Henry III.