

THE STATUE OF KING CHARLES I AT CHARING CROSS

BY

D. G. DENOON,

Hon. Secretary, Mill Hill Historical Society.

THE equestrian statue of King Charles I at Charing Cross is a well-known London landmark that has occupied its present position for more than two and a half centuries. The immediate vicinity of this statue has undergone such complete transformation that no contemporary building exists.

Charing was a little village when Edward I erected the largest Eleanor cross there in 1294, but gradually became connected to the city of London by the building activities of succeeding centuries. Many notable houses arose in this westward expansion of the metropolis, but with the development of Trafalgar Square, begun in 1829, and the demolition of Northumberland House in 1874, the old order of buildings finally passed away, leaving King Charles's statue as the only reminder of an earlier era.

The statue came into existence many years before it was set up at Charing Cross, and below is given for the first time its most interesting and adventurous history.

King Charles I was a noted collector of art treasures, and a contemporary writer stated that "ever since his coming to the Crown (he) has amply testified a Royal liking for ancient statues, by causing a whole army of old foreign emperors, captains and senators all at once to land on his coasts, to come and do him homage and attend him in his palaces."¹ A catalogue of his Majesty's collection was compiled by the antiquary and engraver,

George Vertue, and published after his death.² Among the subsequently famous artists and craftsmen attracted to England in Charles I's reign was a Huguenot sculptor, Hubert le Sueur, who arrived in this country in 1628,³ when his name first occurs in the registers of the French church in Threadneedle Street, London, on 2nd March.⁴ Born at Paris in 1580⁵ (although until recently the year of his birth was considered to have been somewhat later⁶), le Sueur had been a pupil of the famous Giovanni da Bologna at Florence,⁷ and in 1610 he was in Paris helping to complete Bologna's statue of the French King, Henry VI, for the Pont Neuf which was destroyed during the French Revolution. By this time le Sueur was already married and at the baptism of his son in that year, on 17th March, at the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, the sponsors were one of the French King's secretaries and the daughter of another. On that occasion le Sueur was described as "Sculpteur du Roy," indicating that a position of distinction had already been attained at the French Court.⁸

In London, le Sueur lived first in Drury Lane and later resided for many years in St. Bartholomew's Close, near the church of St. Bartholomew the Great in Smithfield. The first commission of importance obtained by the sculptor in England was from Lord Weston, Lord High Treasurer to Charles I. This statesman was a special favourite of the King and had been placed in his high office in 1628, later being created the Earl of Portland. The sculptor was introduced to his patron by Sir Balthazar Gerbier, the painter and courtier who had been knighted in the preceeding year, and Lord Weston, probably in recognition of his Sovereign's favours, instructed le Sueur to make a large equestrian statue of King Charles I on his "great" horse, to be erected in the grounds of the Lord Treasurer's estate at Roehampton in Surrey.

On 15th January, 1630, Sir Balthazar wrote (in French) to his friend stating that "le Sueur will go to

Roehampton to settle a place for *Carolus Magnus*," and an arrangement was suggested for the garden which would make the statue appear to the best advantage.⁹ The next day the same writer sent to Lord Weston a further letter (also in French) enclosing a draft agreement (in English) reading as follows :—

“For the Scrivener

To prepare a drafft for the right Honorable Lord Weston Lord Hey Tresorier of England, for an agreement made with one Hubert le Sueur for the casting of a Horsse in Brasse bigger than a greate Horse by a foot; and the figure of his Maj. King Charles proportionable full six foot, which the afore saide Hubert le Sueur is to perform with all the skill and workmanship as leith in his pouwer, and not only shall be employ at the said Worcke such worckmen onder his directions as shall be skillful able and careful for all parts of the Worcke but also to cast the said Worcke of the best yealouw and red copper and carefully provide for the strengtning and fearme ophouldinge of the same one the Pedistall were itt is to standone at Rohampton in the right Hon the Lord hey Tresorier his Garden.

The saide Sueur is also to make a perfect modell of the said worcke, of the same bignis as the Copper shall be, in the making wereof he shall take the advice of his Maj. Ridders of greate Horsses, as well for the shaep of the Horsse and action as the graesfull shaepe and action of his Maj. figure one the same. Which beinge Performed, with the approbation of his Maj^t and content of his Lordp the afore saide le Sueur is to have for the intyre worcke and full finisheing of the same in Copper and setting in the place where itt is to stand the somme of six hundred pounds to be paid to him in manner followinge

Fifty pounds att the insealing of the Contractt. Three Moneths after (by which tyme th Modell is to be finished and approved by his Maj. and his Lords) hundred pound more. When the worcke shall be readdy to be cast in copper is to receive two hundred pound more.

When itt appeered to be perfectly cast, then is to receive hundred and fifty pound more. And when the worcke is fully and perfectly finished and sett at Rohampton, the last remaining hundred pound. Which Worcke the said Sueur ondertaketh to performe in achtien moneth, the time beginning the day the covnant shall be dated.”

Hubert le Sueur's reputation as a sculptor undoubtedly stood high to have been honoured with this noble commission, and to have been considered worthy of a

payment of £600 ; even after allowance for " setting up in the place where it is to stand " this sum represents a large amount of money in the early seventeenth century. The draft agreement is the work of Sir Balthazar Gerbier and the original document is preserved in the Public Record Office.^{9A} It will be observed that le Sueur intended to take the greatest care in making his work true to life ; in addition to obtaining the advice of the King's riders of " great " horses, the sculptor wished the full-size model of the statue to be approved not only by Lord Weston but by the King himself.

It is known that the statue was cast in 1633, for that date, in addition to the sculptor's name, is inscribed on the left forefoot of the horse, but no explanation has previously been given explaining the lapse of three years between the date of the draft agreement and the final casting of the statue, in view of le Sueur's own estimated time of eighteen months. It is now possible, however, to state definitely that soon after the sculptor's visit to Roehampton as above recorded, he was in 1630 sent to Italy by royal command for the express purpose of collecting works of art for King Charles.¹⁰ If further proof of le Sueur's artistic reputation is required, this direct commission from the King definitely establishes his position as one of the foremost figures in the art world of his time. Upon his return to England le Sueur's next most important work was commenced, and on 27th January, 1631, the King showed his appreciation of the sculptor's services by instructing the Exchequer to issue a warrant " to pay £100 for one year's rent for a house for Monsieur le Sueur and to continue the same annually."¹¹

During the first year's work on the model of the equestrian statue, le Sueur completed a full-size bust of Charles I in white marble, signed and dated 1631, apparently on behalf of the French King, Louis XIII.¹² This work gave the sculptor valuable experience in preparing the large figure of King Charles for the

equestrian model. The statue, having apparently been approved by the King and Lord Weston, was cast in 1633 on a plot of ground in King Street, Covent Garden, close to the site whereon St. Paul's church was then being built.¹³ Final details remained to be completed after the successful casting had been made, and Henry Peacham records¹⁴ that he saw "the great Horse with his Majesty upon it . . . and now well-nigh finished."

The statue represented the King bareheaded, looking slightly towards the left and holding in his right hand a baton which rested on his thigh. He wore a demi suit of armour with a high falling collar and his legs were covered with long boots much crinkled as was the fashion in his lifetime; across his right shoulder was a scarf. He held the reins of the horse in his left hand and on the same side wore a sword. From an ornamental collar round his neck the George was suspended. The stout, long-tailed Flemish horse with full equipment stood with the right foreleg advanced; the head was turned towards the right side and the animal's tail reached almost to the ground. On the left forefoot of the horse was the inscription "HVBBER LE SVER CIT 1633." This work was probably completed towards the middle of 1633, for in that year on 2nd May le Sueur entered into an agreement with Bishop Laud (then Bishop of London) to make large brass statues of the King and Queen which were finished by 13th December, 1634.¹⁵

It is worthy of record that on the bronze bust of Sir Thomas Richardson, the judge, in the south aisle of Westminster Abbey and dated 1635, le Sueur is described as "Regis Sculptor." In the same year Jan Warin executed a medallion portrait of his friend and brother artist, Hubert le Sueur, then in his fifty-fifth year, a reproduction of which is given herewith. (Fig. 1) On 23rd December of the same year the Lord Mayor's list of foreigners living in London records that in the parish of St. Bartholomew the Great lived "Hubert



FIG. I.
HUBERT LE SUEUR, 1635.
From a Medallion by Jan Warin.

le Sueur, by profession a sculptor, a Frenchman born in Paris; he hath dwelt here five years and hath three children, English born, four menservants, one an Englishman and three Frenchmen born at Paris, two of them lived here four years, and the other, two years."¹⁶ Le Sueur's name appears in the register of the French church already mentioned on many occasions until 1641.

The foregoing has described how the equestrian statue came into existence, but for a period of sixteen years¹⁷ no definite information, except of a negative character, is available. Certainly the statue was never erected at Roehampton, as originally intended, but this was undoubtedly due to the death of Lord Treasurer Weston (who had been created the first Earl of Portland two years before) on 13th March, 1635. The statue, in fact, does not appear to have been erected anywhere during the lifetime of the monarch whom it so excellently represented, although, after the Earl of Portland's death, there was an intention, which never materialised, to set up the royal monument in Covent Garden.¹⁸

The political troubles of Charles I's reign, accentuated by his attempt to rule the country without a parliament, brought about the Civil War of 1642 and terminated in the King's public execution in Whitehall on 30th January, 1649, followed by the Interregnum. At the outbreak of civil war Hubert le Sueur returned to France, and was living in Paris in 1651 where he was still known as the "Sculpteur du Roy."¹⁹ The arbitrary Puritan rule of the Commonwealth under Cromwell was responsible for the deliberate destruction of many structures considered to be either Popish or Royalist in origin. Monuments of Charles I were naturally anathematic to Cromwell and were specially marked down for early disfigurement by his commissioners. At a Council of State held on 31st July, 1650, instructions were given to "throw down and break into pieces" statues of the late king and all inscriptions were to be deleted.²⁰

Since the Civil War began, however, the equestrian statue had been secretly concealed in the crypt of St. Paul's church in Covent Garden.²¹ In their anti-Royalist campaign, Cromwell's officers soon heard vague rumours of this hiding place, and on 16th October, 1650, the Council of State instructed Mr. Serjeant "to make enquiry after the statue of the late king in Covent Garden, being cast in brass, and to report in whose custody it now is."²² This officer's investigation, however, was unsuccessful in locating the statue and it continued undisturbed for several years. Subsequently further enquiries were made, and in 1655 a Council of State held on 31st July gave a definite order to General Desborow "to state the matter of fact touching a statue in the churchyard of Covent Garden and to report,"²³ and later investigation confirms the belief that soon after this renewed enquiry the statue was brought to light again. It was seized by Cromwell's representatives and sold "for the rate of old brass, by the pound rate" to John Rivett,²⁴ a brazier, who lived at the Dial, near Holborn Conduit, in St. Sepulchre's parish. Rivett had definite orders to break up the equestrian statue in accordance with Cromwell's previously mentioned instructions, and in due course many different kinds of relics—"knife-handles, candlesticks, nut-crackers, bodkins, thimbles, spoons and patty-pans"²⁵—appeared for sale by Rivett, the metalwork of which, according to the brazier's story, was obtained from the destroyed statue. These mementoes were eagerly bought by those persons of Royalist sympathies as a relic of their martyred king, and at the same time the Puritans were eager to secure the pieces of metalwork as evidence of Cromwell's triumph. By such inglorious means was the equestrian monument of the ill-fated king presumed to have met its end.

At the time when this statue was secreted in the churchyard, as above recorded, other events having a close connection with the subject of this historical study

were taking place. The Puritan and anti-Royalist efforts were responsible for the deliberate damage to the largest Eleanor Cross which had been a notable landmark of London since its erection in the village of Charing by Edward I in 1294. Made of white marble, this cross had given its name inseparably to the locality where it had for so long existed. Charing Cross was gradually²⁶ defaced, in an excess of anti-Popish zeal, in 1647 during the months of June, July and August; part of the stonework was used for paving in Whitehall, and small stones were made into knife-hafts as souvenirs.²⁷ The remains of the Cross were not finally removed until ten years later, according to "an account concerning the digging of the stones being the foundations of Charing Cross, and for leveling and paving in ye ground in the year 1657."²⁸

Soon after the death of Cromwell in 1658 the Commonwealth began to crumble, and on 8th May, 1660, the citizens of London proclaimed Charles II, who was then in Holland, as their King. On 16th May, the same day that Charles received a deputation of lords and commons at the Hague, the Earl of Portland, son of the late Lord Treasurer Weston, presented a petition to the House of Lords in which he stated that "having lately discovered where a brass Horse is with his late Majesty's figure upon it, which in justice he conceives belongs to him, and there being no Courts of Justice now open wherein he can sue for it, doth humbly desire the Lords to be pleased to order that it may not be removed from the place where it now is, nor defaced nor otherwise disposed of."²⁹

The presumed destruction of the statue had never taken place, and the production of the numerous relics sold by the brazier indicates that he was not slow in taking advantage of a unique opportunity to improve his business. Whether Rivett's motive in so successfully concealing the statue indicated his Royalist sympathy, or whether he hoped to dispose of it for a good price at

a more favourable opportunity, will never be known, but it cannot be over-emphasised that the existence of Charles I's equestrian statue as a public monument in London to-day is solely due to the brazier's action in hiding it³⁰ during the anti-Royalist period. There is reason to believe that John Rivett was a Huguenot like the sculptor, Hubert le Sueur, and if such was the case the two men were probably well known to each other, particularly as each was a worker in metals, although of somewhat different application. The brazier was possibly acting in his friend's interest in secreting the statue till it could be safely revealed. It is an interesting, although unanswerable, speculation to wonder whether le Sueur was aware of the true fate of his statue; having left this country for France in 1642, there is no record of his return to England. The contents of the documents above quoted were unknown outside official circles, and the sculptor may have been under the impression that the equestrian monument, his greatest work, had been completely destroyed by Cromwell's action.

In his petition the Earl of Portland indicated that the concealed statue was his property, and so proves that le Sueur had been paid for his work although it had never been erected at Roehampton. John Rivett had received instructions to hand over the statue to the earl's representatives but had declined to do so, probably on the grounds that he had obtained the "horse of brass" by paying for it and that it was therefore his to dispose of as he wished. Two months after the first petition, however, on 19th July, 1660, further instructions were given and "upon complaint made, that one John Rivett, a brazier, refuseth to deliver to the Earl of Portland a statue in brass of the late King on horseback, it is ordered that the said John Rivett shall permit and suffer the Sheriff of London to serve a replevin upon the said statue and horse of brass that are now in his custody and possession."³¹

No record is known indicating when this monument returned to the Portland family, but it is certain that the petition to the House of Lords had the desired effect of compelling John Rivett to relinquish the statue that he had successfully secreted for at least five years. It is doubtful, however, if Jerome Weston, second Earl of Portland ever saw the equestrian statue again, as he died on 17th March, 1663. Rivett seems to have been unfortunate in losing possession of the statue after having been the sole cause of its preservation during the Commonwealth, but he evidently became known in Court circles for in 1668 he entered Charles II's service as "King's Brasier."³² Some years afterwards, illness caused him to visit Bath for medical treatment, and in 1674 he recorded that he was cured of a "true palsie,"³³ but in the following year, at the age of fifty-one, he committed suicide.³⁴

If, as suggested above, the Earl of Portland died before the statue returned to his family, it is certain that his wife, who survived him for thirty-one years, continued the negotiations commenced by her husband. During 1671 the Countess of Portland had apparently been in communication with the King with the idea of selling to him the statue of Charles I. Early next year, on 12th January, a minute book entry in the Treasury records states: "My Lords to speak with the King about his father's statue upon a brass horse, to cost £1500,"³⁵ indicating that an agreement for the sale of the statue had already been made. Three years passed, however, before the bargain was concluded, although in the interval the purchase price had increased. On 30th April, 1675, the King personally signed the authority to pay the sum of £1600 "in full satisfaction for a statue in brass of our royal father, which we have bought of the Right Honbl. the Countess of Portland."³⁶ The Privy Seal was fixed to this document on 26th May, 1675,³⁷ and the statue then became the property of Charles II.

Since the Restoration, parliament had been occupied with numerous matters of importance and among the outstanding events of that period were the Plague of 1665 and the Fire of London in the following year. In the rebuilding of the devastated part of the city after the fire, Dr. Christopher Wren, who had been appointed Assistant Surveyor-General in 1662, was fully engaged and his architectural genius, which need not be mentioned here, secured for him the office of Surveyor-General in 1669. The Earl of Danby (formerly Sir Thomas Osborne) had been appointed Lord High Treasurer of England in 1673. About this time a great revival in public sympathy for Charles I was noticeable, and Bishop Burnet, the well-known contemporary commentator, wrote that "a new measure was taken up, of doing all possible honours to the memory of King Charles I and to all that had been in his interests."³⁸ Lord Danby, as chief minister to Charles II, thereupon made himself responsible for placing the equestrian statue of Charles I in a permanent public position in London. Parliament discussed the disposal of this royal monument and definite arrangements for its erection were soon made. In a Treasury minute book of 1675 is recorded "April 19—The effigy of the old King to be brought to Charing Cross and a place made for it."³⁹ Writing to his brother-in-law, William Popple, on 24th July, 1675, Andrew Marvell, the poet and member of parliament, described "the Busyness of Parliament last sitting" and mentioned that "for more pageantry the old King's statue on horseback, of brass, was bought and (is) to be set up at Charing Cross . . . but does not yet see the light."⁴⁰

Reference has been made to the final passing of the old Charing Cross in 1657 after three and a half centuries of existence, and at the Restoration many regicides were executed "at the place where Charing Cross stood,"⁴¹ as mentioned by Pepys in his Diary.⁴² In the renewed endeavours to vindicate his father's



FIG. 2.
MAP OF CHARING CROSS, 1677.

memory, Charles II would naturally have no objection to the equestrian statue being erected on the site of these executions, and the work was commenced at the end of July, 1675.

At this time Charing Cross was a small, approximately triangular, open space, paved with cobble stones and flanked on the north side by the King's Mews (where 4,500 prisoners captured at the battle of Naseby in 1645 had been lodged); to the east, at the end of the Strand, was Northumberland House, the large residence of the Earl of Northumberland, built in 1605. Turning southward towards Whitehall was Scotland Yard, where the Surveyor of the Works to the Crown lived. At the time when the work on the pedestal of the statue was begun, Sir Christopher Wren (who had been knighted in the previous year) was using this residence, then known as the Office of Works. All the property in Whitehall belonged to the royal palace of which Inigo Jones's Banqueting House was the most recently completed part. In Spring Gardens was a bathing pond and a pheasant yard, also a bowling green put there by Charles I. (See Fig. 2.)

In May, 1675, Sir Christopher Wren was authorised to incur an expenditure of £2 10s. od., for "makeing two designs on paper for the King in order to ye setting up of ye statue of King Charles the first upon a stone pedistall by the Master Surveyor's direction."⁴² Of the drawings prepared for this purpose, one showed the equestrian statue placed on a massive and highly decorated pedestal surrounded by pagan figures and the whole enclosed by a large stone basin containing water; the second illustrated a normal stone plinth with inscriptions and heraldic carvings. The latter design was more acceptable to Charles II and was chosen for the proposed monument at Charing Cross. The preliminary work begun in July, 1675, continued until October and was supervised⁴³ by Sir Christopher Wren. Materials for the stonework of the pedestal and its

foundations were conveyed to the site and the contemporary "Accompt of Philip Parker, Esquire, Paymaster to Works and Buildings"⁴⁴ includes the following items :—

Charges in making a Pedistall for the sitting up of ye brass figure at Charing Cross, viz:

The said accompt is allowed for the money by him issued, paid and defreyed for the charges in making a Pedistall for the setting up of the Brass figure at Charing Cross in the months of July, August, September and October, 1675, by several Artificers, workmen and others, hereafter more particularly expressed, viz,

To Labourers at 2od each per diem	..	45s.
William Cox for 5 days worke of one teame of horses, and a standing cart employed in carrying Materialls to, and earth from the said worke	50s.
Edward Clark for carriage of materials to, and earth from the said work.	70s.
And to Peter Brent Serjant Plumber for old lead used by the Masons about setting up the Brasse figure at Charing Cross	4L. 18s. 0½d.
In all, the said charges of the aforesaid work done and about making a Pedistall for the setting up of the Brass figure at Charing Cross	13L. 3s. 0½d.

The reference to Peter Brent's work in the above account indicates that the statue was placed on the unfinished pedestal before the end of October, 1675. The construction of the monument then ceased until the beginning of April, 1676. The delay was probably due to the established custom of discontinuing outdoor building work during the winter months, but may have been aided by lack of funds; whatever the cause, the work was resumed at the commencement of the new financial year, in April then as at the present time. The scaffolding and boarding erected round the site in the interval did not remain unnoticed. Andrew Marvell wrote a topical poem "On King Charles the First his

Statue. Why it is so long before it is put up at Charing Cross,"⁴⁵ and asked

What can the mystery be why Charing Cross
These five months continue still blinded with board?

and Ogilby, in his contemporary description of London in 1675, mentions Charing Cross "where is now erecting a stately pedestal whereon to place the effigy of King Charles the First on horseback, cast in brass."⁴⁶

In April, 1676, after the interval of five months, work on the monument was resumed. The carving of the stone pedestal has been attributed by many writers to Grinling Gibbons, who may have been responsible for the designs employed, but the work was executed by Joshua Marshall, who had been appointed "Master Mason of all his Majesty's Works, with a fee of 12d. per day and a robe yearly against Xmas out of the Great Wardrobe,"⁴⁷ in October, 1673. In the accounts of the Paymaster of Works and Buildings for the year 1st April, 1676 to 31st March, 1677, the following entries occur:—⁴⁸

Also allowed ye sd acco^{tant} for money by him issued, pd, and defreyed for the extraordinary worke done within the time of this accompt in makeing a pedistall and other works about setting up the brass figure at Charing Cross, viz:—

To Joshua Marshall, m^r mason, for the peddistall, carving the releives, inriching the capitall, paveing wth Purbeck stone within the railes and placing xxviiij great stoope stones wthout ye circle and other Free Masons worke relateing thereunto as by agreem^t 404L. 2s. 6d.

William Beach, smith, for the iron raile ballister and palisado bars wth other smith's work thereunto belonging 89L. 14s. 11d.

John Jolly, pavior, for levelling and new paveing ye ground round about the figure, conteyning 1733 yards, and for other services.. .. . 88L. os. 4d.

John Bridges, bricklayer, for 2 roods 9 foot of brickwork under the foundation of the stone curb, 93 yards one foot of paveing with Flanders bricke, making two draines, and other like services	35L. 1s. -
John Sell, carpenter, for workmanship and materials used about makeing a boarded fence about ye sd figure	17L. 17s. 10d.
Charles Atherton, plomber, for 9 cwt. of lead used in fastning the iron worke	6L. 9s. 9d.
John Cole, braisier, for worke and materials used about mending ye sword, &c.	16L. 10s. -
Giles Reason, carter, for severall daies work with his teames and labourers employed to carry away dirt and soil	5L. 3s. 4d.
Robert Streeter, serjeant painter, for colouring in oil, three times in a place, the iron railles, ballisters, &c.,	3L. 4s. 8d.
And to severall labourers employed in wheeling of earth and rubbish to raise ye ground under ye brick pavement, filling of carts, and watching by nights, &c.	2L. 1s. 9d.
IN ALL ye said charges of ye s ^d worke in making ye peddistall and other workes about setting up the brass figure at Charing Cross,	668L. 6s. 1d.

It will be observed that by far the heaviest charge incurred during the erection of the equestrian statue was for the construction and carving of the stone pedestal. The total cost of all the work done amounted to £681 9s. 1½d., a figure which exceeded the sum that Hubert le Sueur was to have received for the statue, including its setting up at Roehampton. Sometime in 1676, probably towards the end of the year, the newly-erected statue, surrounded by iron railings, was on public view for the first time in its history, and it is interesting to note that the statue was then forty-three years old and that its sculptor was no longer living. During this period of nearly half-a-century the

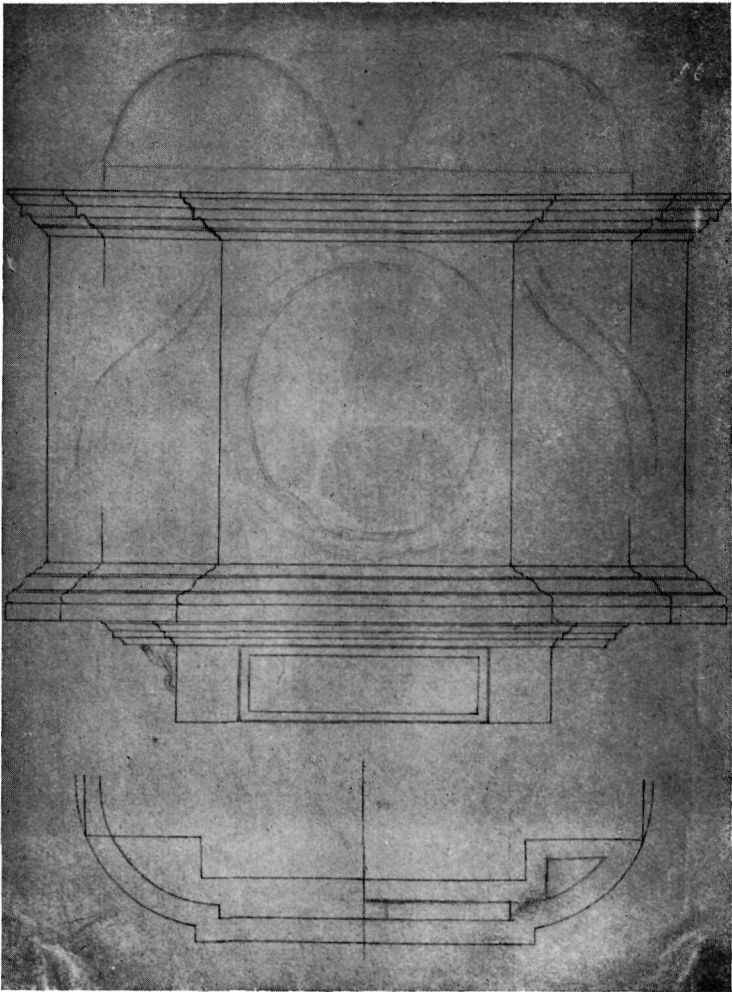


FIG. 3.
DETAILS OF THE STONE PEDESTAL AT CHARING CROSS.
Drawn by Sir Christopher Wren.

statue had, not unnaturally considering its adventures, suffered some minor injuries, and the necessary repairs were carried out by John Cole, the brazier, as indicated in the above account.

In his contemporary history, Bishop Burnet mentions that "the statue of brass on horseback, that had been long neglected, was set up at Charing Cross."⁴⁹ On 31st October, 1678, Lord Treasurer Danby issued a warrant to the auditors of Imprests to allow in the account of Philip Parker, Paymaster of the Works, the cost of "the pedestal for the brass figure at Charing Cross with several other works done about the same—£681 9s. 1½d.,"⁵⁰ thus disproving the suggestion made by later writers that the statue was set up at the personal expense of Lord Danby. It has already been recorded how the equestrian statue came to be commissioned by the then Lord High Treasurer (Lord Weston) in recognition of his Sovereign's favours, and there can be little doubt that Lord Danby, who authorised the expenditure of the necessary Treasury funds, was influenced by a similar motive.

The pedestal remains to-day very much as it appeared at the time of its completion, except for the weathering of the stonework which has rendered the carvings somewhat indistinct. The upper part, a platform on which the statue is fixed, has rounded ends and a heavy moulded and carved cornice; on each side is a recessed panel and at the ends, on the curved surfaces, are shields of the royal Stuart arms, that on the north end having heraldic supporters and at the south end being supported by *putti*. The shields are hung on draperies with trophies of arms beneath. The pedestal rests on a plain rectangular base with a moulded plinth. Sir Christopher Wren made in all three different designs for the stone pedestal,⁵¹ and his original drawings are preserved at All Souls College, Oxford; the working drawing for the approved design of the pedestal as erected at Charing Cross is reproduced. (Fig. 3.)

Apart from the design, however, most of the credit for the pedestal as it is now seen must be given to Joshua Marshall, the King's Master Mason. Only a few years before the Charing Cross monument was erected, this notable craftsman had been engaged in building the Temple Bar,⁵² which was finished in 1672, and he was thus intimately connected with important structures at both ends of the Strand. In the year following the completion of the pedestal for the royal statue, Joshua Marshall was elected a member of the Common Council, but died in 1678 and was buried in the church of St. Dunstan-in-the-West, Fleet Street, where his wife placed a monument on which were recorded many particulars of the master mason's life.⁵³

For many years after the erection of the Charles I statue it was customary for the pedestal to be decorated with oak boughs on the anniversary of Restoration Day; in later times the statue became a shrine for the devoted adherents of the Stuart cause who commemorated the death of the royal martyr.

The choice of the site at Charing Cross was a happy one, for, in addition to the proximity of the royal palace of Whitehall and the King's Mews, it continued the association of the Royal Family begun in the thirteenth century. Soon after the statue had been erected a new map of London was drawn and published in 1677.⁵⁴ The part illustrating Charing Cross (see Fig. 2) gave special prominence to the equestrian statue completed in the previous year; the statue and pedestal are shown surrounded with iron railings, this being the first printed indication of the existence of a London landmark which was to survive many drastic alterations: changes of such an unprecedented character that to-day no contemporary building in the neighbourhood of Charing Cross exists. When considering printed illustrations of the statue, however, mention must be made of Hollar's well-known engraving (Fig. 4) which is the earliest individual representation of the royal monument.



FIG. 4.

HOLLAR'S ENGRAVING OF THE EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF CHARLES I.



FIG. 7.

CHARLES I'S MONUMENT PROTECTED FROM DAMAGE DURING THE WAR 1914-18.

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This engraving is an interesting piece of work but unfortunately bears little resemblance to the actual statue. There can be no doubt that Hollar, who was well acquainted with Charles I, having been employed in his household as drawing master to Charles II when Prince of Wales, and who desired to record his impression of the statue at the earliest opportunity, relied to a very large extent on his imagination. The King's dress and hair are incorrectly drawn and the horse is different from the original in almost every possible way, even to the attitude of the legs upon which it stands. The pedestal shown in the engraving is also imaginary, and the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn from Hollar's picture is that the artist completed his drawing of the statue some considerable time before it was erected on its pedestal at Charing Cross. Several impressions of this engraving exist, and the earlier copies show below the stone pedestal a blank space which was, in later issues, used for descriptive purposes; it is probable that the engraving was begun during the lifetime of the monarch whom it represented.

Sir Christopher Wren's original designs for the complete monument appear to have been based, so far as the equestrian statue is concerned, on Hollar's first engraving as the inaccuracies mentioned are reproduced in the Wren drawings which were naturally finished before the pedestal at Charing Cross was begun.

The statue measures 9 feet $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the plinth to the top of the figure. In the art collection of Charles I was a small model of the brass statue made by le Sueur, "the King's own picture on horseback, upon a black wooden pedestal . . . done for the great equestrian statue."⁵⁵ This interesting relic, which no longer exists, was only 13 inches in length.

Soon after "the great equestrian statue" had been erected at Charing Cross, it became accepted as one of the sights of London, and many coffee-houses and shops in the immediate vicinity took to describing themselves

as "over against," "behind" or "facing" the "King on Horseback"; London cries such as

"I cry my matches at Charing Cross
Where sits a black man on a black horse"

were not uncommon and an old (and to-day little-known) nursery rhyme recorded that

"As I was passing along Charing Cross
I saw a small man upon a black horse,
And when they said he was Charles the First
I felt my heart was ready to burst."

It is probable that le Sueur had never contemplated the circumstances that, on 15th June, 1719, caused a special warrant to be issued at the request of the Lord Mayor and magistrates of Dublin, "giving leave to Mr. John Hoest, statuary, to take a model of the horse at Charing Cross, they intending to place His Majesty⁵⁶ upon horseback in their city."⁵⁷ In August of the same year *The Medley* mentioned that the Charing Cross statue had recently been defaced, but whether this resulted from the efforts of John Hoest cannot now be ascertained.

Charing Cross had become a fashionable centre of London in the eighteenth century, and Dr. Johnson declared⁵⁸ that "the full tide of human existence" was to be found there. As horse-carriages increased in popularity a further change in the appearance of the royal monument took place. On 5th February, 1769, a memorandum stated that "the Board of Works, having given orders for six globe lamps to be fixed on the irons round the statue of King Charles I at Charing Cross, for the safety of carriages, they were lighted up last night for the first time."⁵⁹ Malton's engraving of the monument in 1795 shows the oil lanterns in position. (See Fig. 5.) Apart from the defacement recorded above, the first misfortune which befel the statue was the detachment of the sword, buckles and straps which fell to the ground on 14th April, 1810. These fittings were picked up by a porter named Moxham from the



FIG. 5.

A VIEW OF CHARLES I'S STATUE IN 1795, WITH NORTHUMBERLAND HOUSE IN THE BACKGROUND.

Engraving by T. Malton.

Golden Cross Hotel, who deposited them in the care of Mr. Isaac Eyre, a near-by trunk-maker, who apprised the Board of Green Cloth of the circumstances. The fallen appendages were made of similar metal to that of the statue.⁶⁰ In the official records of H.M. Office of Works is a letter from Mr. Eyre dated "Charing Cross, 23rd April, 1810," wherein the writer demurs to handing over the sword and other fittings "which have lately fallen from the statue of King Charles" until he has received definite instructions from the Board of Green Cloth at St. James's Palace. Soon afterwards these fittings were restored to their original positions. The lanterns seen in Fig. 5 were replaced in 1827 by two tall gas lamps.

Before many years had passed extensive alterations were made at Charing Cross, as the result of an Act of Parliament.⁶¹ The King's Mews⁶² disappeared in 1830 owing to the formation of Trafalgar Square, begun in the preceding year, and several other earlier buildings were demolished to enable wider roadways to be constructed. During these changes the paving around the pedestal was enlarged and six lamp standards were placed in position after the former gas lamps had been removed. The bases of these standards were each inscribed "WR IV," surmounted by a crown, and the iron posts which still exist round the statue are the remains of the standards. (T. S. Boys' view of Charing Cross (1841) and Jules Arnout's lithograph (1856) both show these lamp standards in position, and lamps of similar design are also in position to-day near the equestrian statue of King George III in Pall Mall East.)

In 1836 the statue was seen to be defective and Sir Francis Chantrey was requested to examine the monument on behalf of the Office of Works.⁶³ His report mentioned "some indications of failure in the top of the pedestal, owing to the cornice moulding having been made in four separate pieces of stone and fastened with iron instead of copper clamps." Sir Francis stated,

however, that "not the least alarm need be felt as to the stability of the pedestal, notwithstanding its weatherworn appearance," to which he attached little importance. He also was of the opinion that "any attempt at restoration would lead to great and useless expense."

In 1844, on 28th October, Queen Victoria visited the City in state to open the new Royal Exchange and, for the purpose of viewing the procession, seats were erected round the pedestal of the monument. It was on this occasion that the sword and the George decoration were stolen from the statue; these ornaments were never returned and the space originally occupied by the order has been vacant ever since. The missing sword was later replaced by one reputed to have been of the original period.

Nine years later, in the spring of 1853, a second cast of the statue was made by Signor Brucciani for the Sculpture Court at the Crystal Palace, where this reproduction may be seen to-day. This work required three tons of plaster and half-a-ton of iron, although for the making of the moulds and the casting, and erecting the latter, 22 tons of plaster and 15 tons of iron were used.⁶⁴ During the progress of this work, the Office of Works took advantage of Brucciani's offer to supply plaster casts of the carved stonework of the pedestal for use in case of future restorations, and £40 was paid for this service.⁶⁵

Not many months after this reproduction had been completed, Sir Richard Westmacott was consulted with reference to the safety of the monument. In the winter of 1853-4 he reported that "the standing leg on the nearside was fractured to the knee and open to the weather, caused obviously by the vibration from carriages and the wind; the off hind leg was also fractured." The black marble slab in which the supports were fixed was also said to be in a shattered condition, and the whole monument was in imminent danger. Many

parts, such as the bridle, bit and sword were missing, and the tail of the horse was defective. In addition, the pedestal was pronounced to be beyond repair. In view of this serious condition of the monument, immediate steps were taken to secure its preservation, and the Treasury authorised the sum of £1000 to be set aside "for the necessary restoration and repairs." Mr. (later Sir Gilbert) Scott was commissioned to report on the condition of the statue and pedestal; with the assistance of Mr. John Thomas a complete examination was undertaken, and Scott proposed that "the statue should be lifted up and a new granite plinth inserted, a broad copper band let into the top of the pedestal with strong dowels, the dowels sufficiently long to go through the granite plinth, fixed to the feet of the horse, securing the whole firmly together." The repair work detailed in this report was carried out during the winter of 1855-56, and the missing parts of the statue were renewed at the same time. The heads of the iron bolts which fastened the feet of the horse were found to be entirely destroyed by rust and these were also replaced. Mr Scott considered that the stonework of the pedestal need not be renewed as "although decayed, it was sufficiently strong to support the figure." Out of the Treasury allocation for this restoration only £240 were expended.

In 1860 the iron railings were removed at a cost of £27, after which the Vestry of St. Martin's asked that the monument might be removed to the centre of the roadway, but this proposal was not entertained. Seven years later, in December, 1867, Her Majesty's Theatre in Haymarket was destroyed by fire, and a newspaper reporter scaled the pedestal of the statue to obtain a good view of the conflagration. In climbing up, however he caught hold of the sword which broke off in his hand; having dropped it to the ground, it was seized by a member of the crowd who presumably kept it as a souvenir.⁶⁷ From that day the statue has been unarmed.

It will be observed from the above-mentioned reports that the Office of Works had neglected no opportunity of devoting a protective care well worthy of the royal monument since the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it came under that department's custody and when, in 1869, Mr. Thomas Milnes suggested that the statue was in a dangerous condition, a report specially made by Mr. Taylor declared that no defect in it would justify him in saying that the statue was unsafe, although the figure leaned slightly to one side, while the pedestal was perfectly upright. Only one superficial defect was noticeable, in the left foreleg.

Following the sale of Northumberland House to the Metropolitan Board of Works for £497,000, the demolition of this building in 1874 made way for the present Northumberland Avenue, and finally removed all traces of the former Charing Cross, with the exception of Charles I's statue which then became an historic monument of an earlier period. Of the old Palace of Whitehall which had been destroyed by fire in January, 1698, the Banqueting House alone remained and still exists as another and tragic reminder of the Stuart age. The dimensions and architectural details of the stone pedestal were carefully recorded in 1883 and are reproduced herewith.⁶⁸ (Fig. 6.) It is interesting to compare some of the details with those shown in Wren's working drawing. (Fig. 3.)

The paving round the pedestal was rearranged in 1891 at the cost of the Vestry of St. Martin's. Attempts made by members of Jacobite clubs and others to place wreaths upon the pedestal on 30th January, the anniversary of the execution of Charles I, were discouraged by the Office of Works until 1912; from that year the wreaths have been accepted and placed thereon by officials of that department. The cleaning and inspection of the monument at regular intervals is arranged by the Clerk of Works at St. James's Palace. Royal proclamations had been read near the statue for many

PEDESTAL OF MONUMENT KING CHARLES I. CHARING CROSS.

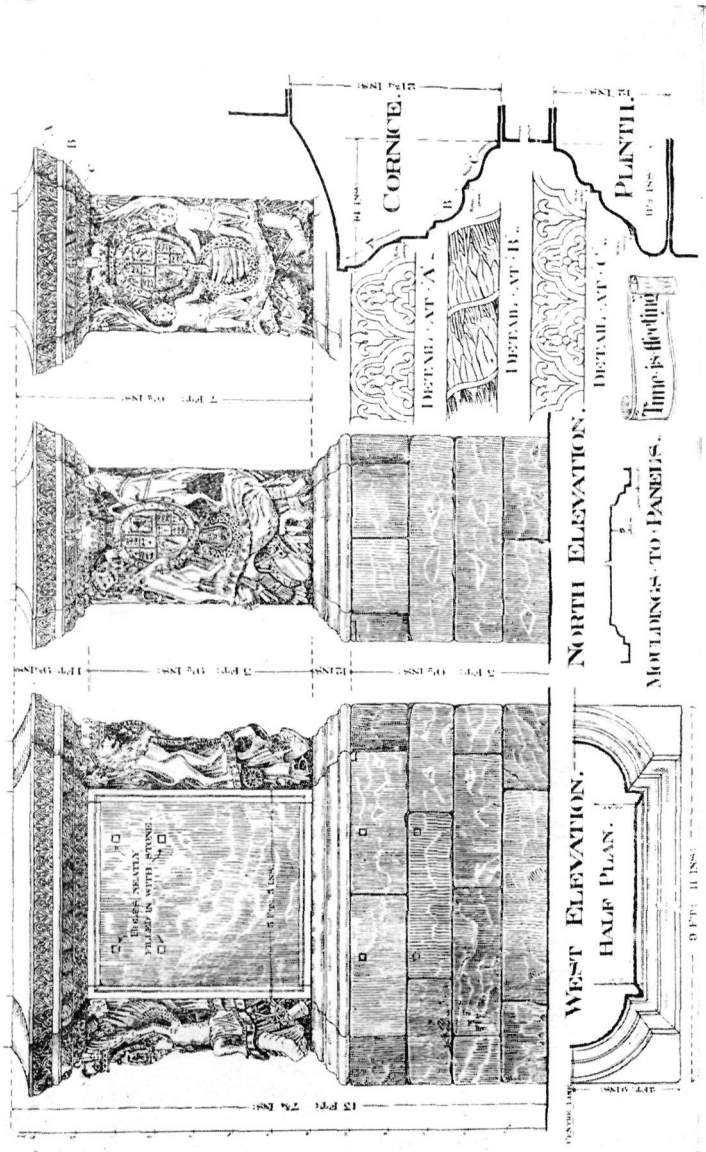


FIG. 6. DETAILS OF THE STONE PEDESTAL AT CHARING CROSS.

years, but immediately after the death of Queen Victoria an official announcement stated that "no proclamation is to be made at Charing Cross."⁶⁹

The protection accorded the monument in earlier times of national strife has already been described, but during the War, 1914-18, the danger of injury from hostile aircraft presented a problem to the authorities responsible for the safety of the royal monument, and in 1917 a request from the National Gallery to the Office of Works resulted in a most praiseworthy scheme of protection from this hitherto unsuspected source of danger. At a cost of approximately £400,⁷⁰ the statue and pedestal were entirely covered in by layers of sandbags supported on a wooden framework and the whole enclosed in a casing of corrugated iron. (Fig. 7.) This precaution was undoubtedly the means of preserving the monument from injury; Charing Cross station and the Government offices in Whitehall were attacked from the air by enemy aircraft on many occasions, particularly in September, 1917. Before the framework was finally removed in 1919 an examination of the statue revealed defects in the casting of the horse; fractures in the fore-legs would eventually have caused the statue to collapse and the horse's tail was in danger of falling off. The necessary repairs were immediately executed and since then the statue has remained untouched, although a copper plate inscribed with a brief account of the monument was fixed to the east side of the pedestal in December, 1927.

At some earlier period, subsequent to 1795, metal inscription plates were fixed to the sides of the stone pedestal, and although several prints of different dates show indications of these inscriptions, it is only possible to recognise the words "CAROLUS MAGNUS," as the remainder of the lettering is of much smaller size and is indecipherable. There were four inscription plates in all, one fixed to the plinth and one to the panelled recess of the pedestal on each side. Before 1838,

however, all traces of the inscriptions had disappeared,⁷¹ and the holes in the stonework indicating the position of the fixings had been neatly plugged with stone, as shown in Fig. 6 and as can still be seen to-day.

With the ever-increasing volume of traffic in Trafalgar Square, and owing to the introduction of the "one-way" system, it is probable that, in spite of the greater number of people who pass the statue, fewer have an opportunity of inspecting it at close quarters. The adventures recorded above give this monument particular interest, but, as a work of art alone, it is worthy of the most careful study and appreciation. The statue was undoubtedly Hubert le Sueur's greatest work and it is the finest figure in this country of its period. It has confidently been asserted that as an equestrian statue, Charles I's monument is surpassed only by Verrocchio's bronze statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni in Venice, and Donatello's Gattamelata at Padua which were cast one and a half centuries earlier. Le Sueur's work was the first equestrian statue to be seen in England, although Gerard Christmas, a sculptor who had worked on the carved front of Northumberland House, had been responsible for an equestrian figure of James I in bas-relief which he carved on the northern side of Aldgate.⁷² (All trace of this figure vanished when the gateway was destroyed in 1761.) Happily, however, in spite of its adventures and after two and a half centuries in its present position, le Sueur's equestrian statue of Charles I at Charing Cross remains for all to see as the oldest equestrian monument in this country and as *the most interesting public monument in London.*

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2. *A Catalogue of King Charles I's Collection of Pictures and Statues, etc.*, 1757.
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4. *Pro. Huguenot Society of London*, Vol. VII, p. 78.
5. *Thieme*, 1929, p. 133.
6. *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

7. *The Compleat Gentleman*, 1634, p. 108.
8. *Pro. Huguenot Society*, Vol. VII, p. 77.
9. Cal. S.P. Dom., 1629-1631, p. 165.
- 9a. P.R.O. S.P. 16/158.
10. *Exchequer Receipts*. Issue Warrants, Charles I, No. 152. (25th May, 1630.)
11. Cal. S.P. Dom., 1629-1631, p. 491.
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13. *Pro. Huguenot Society*, Vol. XII, p. 349. St. Paul's church was begun in 1631 and consecrated in 1638.
14. *The Compleat Gentleman*, 1634, p. 108.
15. Cal. S.P. Dom., 1633-34, p. 43.
16. Cal. S.P. Dom., 1635, p. 593.
17. 1634 to 1650.
18. *Dict. Nat. Biog.*
19. *Pro. Huguenot Society*, Vol. VII, p. 77.
20. Cal. S.P. Dom., 1650, p. 261.
21. *Pro. Huguenot Society*, Vol. XII, p. 350.
22. Cal. S.P. Dom., 1650, p. 389.
23. Cal. S.P. Dom., 1655, p. 265.
24. *Angliae Notitia*, Part 2, p. 303 (1684). The brazier's name is elsewhere spelt Revet or Ryvett.
25. *Brambletye House*, Horatio Smith. 2nd Edition, Vol. I, p. 28.
26. The cross was so strongly constructed of white marble cemented with mortar made of "purest lime, Callis sand, white of eggs and strongest wort" that it "defied all hammers and hatchets." *Antiquities of Westminster*. J. T. Smith, p. 15.
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41. General E. Ludlow's *Memoirs*, 1698, Vol. III, p. 69.
42. 13th and 15th October, 1660.
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43. *Wren Society*, Vol. V, p. 52.
44. *Declared Accounts*. Pipe Office Roll 3289. These accounts do not appear to have been published previously.
45. *Harl. MS. 7351*. This poem, with slightly altered wording, is included in Marvell's collected works.
46. *Britannia*. J. Ogilby, 1675.
47. Cal. S.P. Treasury, 1672-75, p. 421.

48. *Declared Accounts*. Pipe Office Roll 3290.
49. *History of My Own Time*. Bishop Burnet, Vol. I, p. 373.
50. Cal. S.P. Treasury, 1676-79, p. 1152.
51. *Wren Society*, Vol. V, plates 38-40.
52. *Memorials of Temple Bar*. J. C. Noble, p. 31.
53. This church was demolished in 1828 and the present church consecrated in 1833. The Marshall monument was removed to the new building and is now in the Fisher chapel.
54. *London accurately Surveyed*, 1677. Begun by J. Ogilby and finished by Wm. Morgan.
55. *Catalogue of King Charles I's Collection*. G. Vertue, Vol. I, p. 25.
56. Presumably George I.
57. *Home Counties Magazine*, 1899, p. 84.
58. *Boswell*, by Crocker, p. 443.
59. *Story of Charing Cross*. J. H. Macmichael, p. 77.
60. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1810, p. 377.
61. 7 Geo. IV, c. 77.
62. The Mews had been rebuilt by William Kent in 1732.
63. The following reports on the statue are quoted, by special permission, from the original documents in the official records of H.M. Office of Works.
64. *Story of Charing Cross*. J. H. Macmichael, p. 78.
65. H.M.O.W. The plaster casts are no longer in existence.
66. *The Builder*, 7th January, 1905, p. 9.
67. *The Sunday Times*, 27th January, 1924.
68. Reproduced, by permission, from *The British Architect*.
69. *The Times*, 24th January, 1901.
70. *London's Open Air Statuary*. Lord Gleichen, p. 4.
71. *Notes and Queries*, 11th Series, Vol. I, p. 194.
72. *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

ILLUSTRATIONS.

FIG.

1. Hubert le Sueur, 1635. From a medallion by Jan Warin.
2. Map of Charing Cross, 1677.
3. Details of the stone pedestal at Charing Cross. Drawn by Sir Christopher Wren.
4. Hollar's engraving of the equestrian statue of Charles I.
5. A view of Charles I's statue in 1795, with Northumberland House in the background. Engraving by T. Malton.
6. Details of the stone pedestal at Charing Cross.
7. Charles I's monument protected from damage during the War 1914-18. (Reproduced by permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office.)