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# HAMPTON COURT

**Described by Walter Jerrold  
Pictured by E. W. Haslehurst**





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**THE LION GATE**

## Beautiful England

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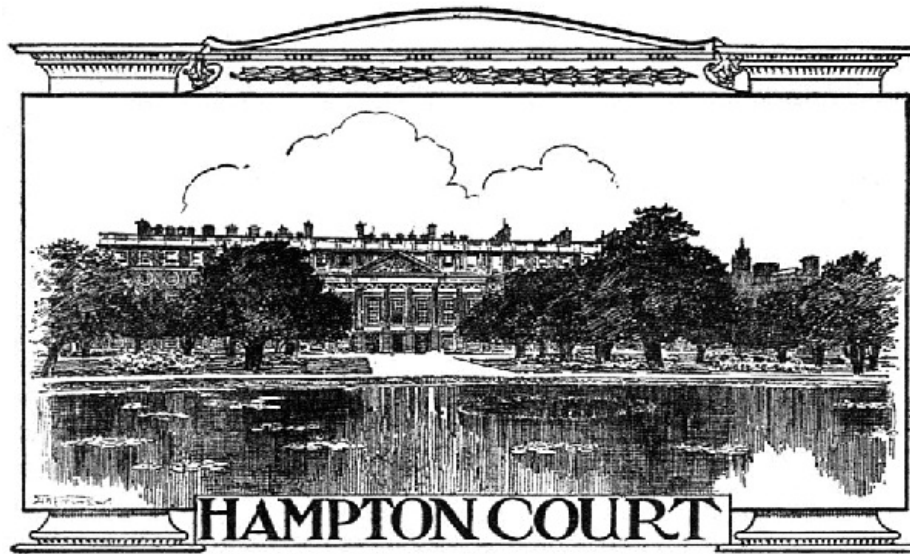
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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	Page
The Lion Gate	<i>Frontispiece</i>
The Great Gatehouse, West Entrance	8
A Corner of Wolsey's Kitchen	14
Anne Boleyn's Gateway, Clock Court	20
Master Carpenter's Court	26
Fountain Court	32
The Great Hall	38
The Pond Garden	42

East Front from the Long Water	46
The Wilderness in Spring	50
The Long Walk	54
The Long Water in Winter	58



“Close by those meads for ever crown’d with  
flowers  
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising  
towers  
There stands a structure of majestic frame,  
Which from the neighb’ring Hampton takes its  
name.”—*Pope*.

## I

For combined beauty and interest—varied beauty and historical interest—there is no place “within easy reach of London”, certainly no place within the suburban radius, that can compare with the stately Tudor palace which stands on the left bank of the Thames, little more than a dozen miles from the metropolis and, though hidden in trees, within eye-reach of Richmond. It is not only one of the “show places”, which every traveller from afar is supposed to visit as something of a duty, but it is a place that conveys impressions of beauty and restfulness in a way that few others can. It remains ancient without having lapsed into a state of desuetude that leaves everything to the imagination; it is a living whole far from any of the garishness that belongs to contemporaneity. Whether seen from the outside on the west, where the warm red brick, the varied roofs, the clustered decorative chimneys suggestive of the Tudor time make a rich and harmonious whole; or from the south east, where the many-windowed long straight lines of the Orange additions show the red brick diversified with white stone, it is a noble and impressive pile. Within, too, are priceless treasures, themselves alone the objective of countless pilgrimages. And recognizing the attractions of the buildings and their contents is to take no account of the lovely grounds, and of the crowding associations of a place that, since its establishment four hundred years ago, has again and again been the centre at which history was made.

Throughout our records for many centuries the valley of the Thames has been favoured when our monarchs have sought to establish a new home. Greenwich and London—the Tower, Whitehall, Buckingham Palace—Richmond and Hampton Court, Windsor, Reading and Oxford, are some of the places that have at one time or another been the chosen centre of royal life; and Hampton Court Palace is the newest of those situated close on the river’s bank, though nearly two hundred years have elapsed since it was a regular royal residence. It was, indeed, for something less than the same length of time that it was in use as a home of the sovereign, but within that period it saw two revolutions, and the change of national conditions from the comparative mediævalism of the days of the eighth Henry to the comparative modernity of the beginning of the Hanoverian era. It is not, perhaps, overfanciful to see something of the lavish richness, the opulent homeliness, of the earlier period typified in the varied buildings, courts, and gateways of the Tudor portion of the Palace, and the more formal grandeur of the later time in the symmetrical stateliness of the later part.

Hampton Court Palace was the centre of many of the bluff King Henry's hunting parties—and the scene of some of his marital excitements, and here, too, his long-hoped-for son was born; it was the scene of Elizabethan pageantry, and of the attempt on the part of the Virgin Queen's successor to force other men's religion into his own particular groove; at Hampton Court Charles the First was seen at his best in the domestic circle and—after the interregnum—where his son was seen at his worst in anti-domestic intrigues. Here Cromwell sought rest from cares greater than those of a king, and here he was stricken with mortal illness; here William and Mary dwelt, and here the former met with the seemingly trivial accident which cost him his life. That the "story" of Hampton Court is, indeed, a full, splendid, and varied one is shown in the three fine volumes in which it is set forth by Mr. Ernest Law, a work to which no writer on the history of the Palace can help feeling indebted. Those who would learn the intimacies and details of the history of the place have Mr. Law's history, and those who seek a "guide" are well provided for in the official publications. Here, I am concerned with the history of the place only in its broader and more salient points, and with the minor details necessary in a guidebook not at all; I seek rather to give something of an impression of the past and present of the Palace, something that shall at once indicate the associations of the place, indicate its story, and hint at what there is to see, and that shall serve as souvenir and remembrancer of that which has been seen.

[Pg 8]



[See larger image](#)

## THE GREAT GATEHOUSE, WEST ENTRANCE

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## II

It was just before he became a cardinal that Thomas Wolsey, on 11 January, 1515, took a ninety-nine years' lease of the manor of Hampton Court from the Knights Hospitaller of St. John of Jerusalem, and at once set about building the magnificent pile which remains his most enduring monument. There appears to have been here an earlier manor house or mansion, for there is a record of Henry the Seventh visiting it a few years before the lease was granted; but probably Wolsey did away entirely with the older building and planned the whole place anew. Rapidly rising in royal favour the Cardinal designed a lordly pleasure house on the banks of the Thames, where he could worthily entertain his pleasure-loving sovereign, and where he could hold state in a manner that should prove impressive in the eyes of ambassadors and other important visitors from foreign Courts.

[Pg 9]

It is said that Wolsey's health was such that it was necessary for him to have a residence away from London, yet his position made it essential that he should still be within easy reach of the capital; therefore he "employed the most eminent physicians in England and even called in the aid of doctors from Padua, to select the most healthy spot within twenty miles of London", and the result was the selection of Hampton and the erection of the princely Palace which has seen its royal neighbours of Hanworth and Richmond pass from palaces to mere fragments, and Nonsuch disappear entirely.

Having acquired his new manor Wolsey lost no time in getting his designs carried into execution, and the magnificent edifice, built about five courts or quadrangles, grew so rapidly that in 1516 he was already able to entertain Henry the Eighth here. The whole Palace was of red brick, and surmounted by many castellated turrets topped by ornamental lead cupolas. The western portion of the buildings probably gives us a very fair idea of the whole as it was planned, though all the turrets from this aspect are wanting their cupolas, though the gatehouse is less lofty than it was originally and though some more westerly buildings have disappeared.

[Pg 10]

As the Cardinal waxed in importance his stately palace grew until its magnificence set tongues wagging, and it was said that the Churchman's residence outshone in splendour the castles of the King. John Skelton, in his satire *Why come ye not to Court?* probably only gave fuller expression to things which many people were saying, when the powerful favourite was approaching the period of his declination:

“Why come ye not to court?  
To whyche Court?  
To Kynge's courte,  
Or to Hampton Court?—  
Nay, to the Kynge's court:  
The Kynge's Courte  
Shulde have the excellence;  
But Hampton Court  
Hath the preemynence.  
And Yorke's Place  
With my lord's grace,  
To whose magnifycence  
Is all the conflowence,  
Sutys and supplycacons  
Embassades of all nacyons.”

[Pg 11]

York Place was Cardinal Wolsey's scarcely less magnificent residence at Westminster.

Whether inspired by jealousy owing to the things said of the state upheld by Wolsey, or whether his repeated visits simply inspired the monarch with envy of his Chancellor's new palace cannot be said, but when Hampton Court had been building for ten years King Henry, we are told, asked the Chancellor why he had erected so magnificent a place. “To show how noble a palace a subject may offer to his Sovereign,” was the reply of the Cardinal—a truly courtly and an unquestionably costly compliment. The King accepted the noble gift, but Wolsey continued from time to time to occupy his own whilom palace at Hampton and was besides given permission to make use of the royal palace at Richmond. This was in 1525, and already it may be the shadow of coming events was over both the powerful Churchman and the fickle King, though Wolsey was still three or four years from that final downfall which was soon followed by his death.

Though the ownership of Hampton Court had passed from the subject to the sovereign, the former continued on occasion to do the honours of the place to distinguished visitors. In 1527, for example, there came a noble “ambasset” from France, and arrangements were made for the due entertainment here of the French nobles and their retinue. A full account of it is given in George Cavendish's *Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey*, the earliest of our biographies and assuredly one of the most delightful. There is not space here to transcribe Cavendish's full account of the splendid entertainment accorded to “this great ambasset ... who were in number above fourscore and the most noblest and worthiest gentlemen in all the court of France”; but the biographer, who was gentleman-usher to the Cardinal, and thus well situated for giving an authoritative record of things, was also an admirable narrator, and from his description we may get a good idea of Tudor prodigality and splendour. Not only were there the fourscore French nobles, but there were also their trains and the many home visitors who must have been invited to accompany them; so that two hundred and eighty beds had to be arranged. We are told how the best cooks were brought together, and wrought day and night in the preparing of “divers subtleties and many crafty devices”, how the purveyors “brought and sent in such plenty of costly provisions as ye would wonder at the same”, and further:

[Pg 12]

“The yeomen and grooms of the wardrobes were busied in hanging of the chambers with costly hangings, and furnishing the same with beds of silk, and other furniture apt for the same in every degree. Then my Lord Cardinal sent me, being gentleman usher, with two other of my fellows, to Hampton Court to foresee all things touching our rooms, to be noblily garnished accordingly. Our pains were not small or light, but travailing daily from chamber to chamber. Then the carpenters, the joiners, the masons, the painters, and all other artificers necessary to glorify the house and feast were set to work. There was carriage and re-carriage of plate, stuff and other rich implements; so that there was nothing lacking or to be imagined or devised for the purpose. There were also fourteen score beds provided and furnished with all manner of furniture to them belonging, too long particularly here to rehearse. But to all wise men it sufficeth to imagine, that knoweth what belongeth to the furniture of such triumphant feast or banquet.”

[Pg 13]

Cavendish goes on to tell of the sumptuousness and wonder of the entertainment which the Cardinal gave to his guests before speeding them on their way to Windsor on the following day.



Of the furnishing of the chambers for the “fourteen score beds” prepared for the guests, he gives details which suggest an extraordinary display of gold and silver; but the whole account should be read in the biography of Wolsey, where it gives us a peculiarly full and detailed description of the splendour of banqueting in Tudor days. And it must be added, that though “the Frenchmen, as it seemed, were rapt into paradise”, yet this feast at Hampton Court was but as “silver is compared to gold” when contrasted with that which the King gave at Greenwich a little later to speed his parting guests on their homeward journey. In the full account which Cavendish gives of the feasting at Hampton Court and in his description of the furnishings of York House, Westminster, when Wolsey left it on his last unhappy journey, we have glimpses of the richness and magnificence to which the great men of the sixteenth century had attained in the heyday of Henry the Eighth. King Henry was at Hampton Court, engaged in practising archery in the park when George Cavendish arrived with the news of Wolsey’s death, and the bluff King paid his old and too loyal servant the tribute of saying that he would rather have given £20,000 than he had died. The King did not, however, let any sentiment about the builder of Hampton Court trouble him long or interfere with his plans.

[Pg 14]



[See larger image](#)

#### **A CORNER OF WOLSEY'S KITCHEN**

When the monarch came into full possession of Hampton Court he soon converted the lease into freehold by arrangements with the Knights Hospitaller, and at once set about having it made yet more magnificent than before. Among his improvements was the erection of the Great Hall—one of the finest buildings of the kind belonging to the Tudor period that remain to us; he rebuilt, or at any rate considerably altered, the Chapel, and made many other changes in the Palace. His additions and alterations may sometimes be recognized by the working of his monogram and those of his wives into the decoration, as in the roof of Anne Boleyn’s Gateway, where that unhappy lady’s initial is to be seen. For though this roof is a modern restoration, it is a restoration believed to be in accordance with the original design. Such evidence is not therefore always conclusive, for sometimes the monograms are not contemporary records—as in the windows of the Great Hall where the stained glass, full of such personal allusions, is all modern, having been put in between sixty and seventy years ago. Those responsible for the replacing, after a long interval, of the glass that had been destroyed when all concerning royalty was out of favour, worked in monograms and devices in a way that misleads many visitors, some of whom seeing “H” and “J” in the glass, too rashly assume that it dates from the time when Jane Seymour was the much married monarch’s queen.

[Pg 15]

When Anne Boleyn’s ambition was gratified and she was made Henry’s second queen—vice Katherine of Arragon, divorced—Hampton Court became for a time a scene of royal revelling. It was not so for long, however, for already the King’s passion was cooling. It was at Hampton Court that King Henry’s hopes of a son and heir were disappointed for the third time, when, early in 1536, Anne there gave birth to a still-born child. In the following May the unhappy Queen’s brief triumph was brought to a tragic close by the sword of the executioner on Tower Hill, and on the very next day King Henry was formally betrothed to Jane Seymour. In October of the following year Queen Jane gave birth in this Palace, presumably in that part of the buildings demolished more than a century and a half later, to a son who afterwards became King Edward

[Pg 16]

the Sixth. The arrival of a male heir was no doubt a matter of great gratification to King Henry, and served to lessen any sorrow that his easily salved affections might otherwise have felt from the fact that the Queen only survived the child's birth but a brief while. When he was but three days old the infant prince was christened here in great state. The Princess Mary held her tiny brother, twenty years her junior, during the ceremony at the solid silver font, while the child Princess Elizabeth, herself carried, bore the chrism. Nine days after the christening of her son Queen Jane died.

The birth of Prince Edward in the Palace seems to have increased King Henry's liking for his Thames-side pleasaunce, and in 1540 he caused the Honour of Hampton Court to be created by Act of Parliament—the Honour including a number of manors on both sides of the Thames. But the King further showed his liking for the place—and his scant regard for his subjects—by making it the centre of a Chase, having a large extent of the land on either side of the river afforested and enclosed with palings so that, though growing corpulent and unwieldy, he might yet be able to indulge in his favourite pastime of hunting.

[Pg 17]

At the end of July, 1540, King Henry quietly married Katherine Howard, and in August she was openly shown at Hampton Court as his fifth queen. Little more than a year later and the Palace saw the beginning of the slow drama which ended with her execution on Tower Hill in February, 1543; for it was while Henry was at Mass in the chapel here that Cranmer put into his hands the beginning of the evidence which was to prove a fatal net for the entangling of Queen Katherine. The story runs that the Queen sought to have a personal explanation with King Henry, but he would not see her after once the charges were made, and when she tried to get to him in the chapel she was borne shrieking away by the attendants along what is now known as the Haunted Gallery. There her wraith has since been seen and heard!

The bluff King seems to have been little troubled by his various pasts, nor to have been worried at all by earlier associations, for in the summer of 1543 he was married here at Hampton Court, to the last of his queens, Katherine Parr, in the presence of the daughters of Katherine of Arragon and Anne Boleyn, the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth. Thus the Palace has associations with all of the six queens of King Henry, the one of whom Hampton Court has least memory being Anne of Cleves, the Queen who appears never to have had even the briefest place in the roving affections of the King, and who enjoyed little of the Court splendour beyond the magnificence of her reception at Greenwich. Anne was at Hampton while awaiting the decree of divorce which followed close upon the ceremony of her marriage; and it was the neighbouring Palace of Richmond that became the home of this Queen, who was promptly removed from the position of the King's wife to that of his "sister".

[Pg 18]

Edward the Sixth during his short reign appears to have been but little associated with the place of his birth, though he was here when the Protector Somerset was nearing his fall, and hence were sent out frantic appeals to the people to come armed to the defence of their youthful sovereign. Here King Edward splendidly entertained Mary of Guise, Queen-Dowager of Scotland, on her journey through England. The most notable association of Hampton Court with the boy-king's reign is, however, that it was then that the aggrieved people of the surrounding afforested area dared to give voice to their feelings and petition against that oppression before which they had had to bow under Henry. The petition was successful, and the district was dechased, the palings and deer being removed.

[Pg 19]

King Edward's dour sister-successor Queen Mary and her sombre spouse Philip of Spain were scarcely the people to make the place bright on their occasional visits, and when they were here shortly after their marriage it was said "the hall door within the Court was continually shut, so that no man might enter unless his errand were first known: which seemed strange to Englishmen, that had not been used thereto". The most gorgeous association of the depressing couple with Hampton Court was the Christmas feast of 1554, when the Great Hall was illuminated "with a thousand lamps curiously disposed".

When Elizabeth came to the throne the Palace became again the centre of much Court splendour. It is a curious fact that although magnificence and pomp are generally more associated with Roman Catholic than with Protestant Courts, the Tudors were exceptions to the rule. Under Queen Elizabeth, Hampton Court saw again something of the brilliancy and pageantry in which her father had delighted. Here Her Majesty held high revel at Christmas on more than one occasion—"if ye would know what we do here," wrote one in attendance to a friend, in 1592, "we play at tables, dance—and keep Christmas". Elizabeth had been brought to Hampton Court shortly after the marriage of her sister with Philip, in the hope that she might be turned to their way of religion, but though she was for a time a sort of semi-prisoner in the Palace it became one of her favoured places of residence after her accession. Here she toyed with the idea of matrimony and entertained wooers or their ambassadors, and here she held high state and gorgeous pageantry of which many records have been kept. Elizabeth appears, indeed, to have had something of her father's love for the place and to have added to it or embellished it from time to time. On the south side of the Palace, Wren's reconstruction stops short at beautiful bayed windows doubly decorated with the monogram E. R. and the date 1568.

[Pg 20]

A foreign Duke visiting Hampton Court during Elizabeth's reign described it as the most splendid, most magnificent royal palace of any to be found in England or any other kingdom, and the details which he gives seems to bear this out. More especially was he struck by what a later verse writer described as "that most pompous room called Paradise", a room which, according to the ducal description, "captivates the eyes of all who enter by the dazzling of pearls of all kinds",

and “in particular there is one apartment belonging to the Queen, in which she is accustomed to sit in state, costly beyond everything; the tapestries are garnished with gold, pearls, and precious stones—one table-cover alone is valued at above fifty thousand crowns—not to mention the royal throne, which is studded with very large diamonds, rubies, sapphires and the like that glitter among other precious stones and pearls as the sun among the stars”.

[Pg 21]



[See larger image](#)

### ANNE BOLEYN'S GATEWAY, CLOCK COURT

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## III

If under the Tudors—more especially the pleasure-loving Henry and the display-loving Elizabeth—Hampton Court was the scene of much splendid pageantry, under the Stuart monarchs it was the scene of more varied happenings, even as it was the home of yet more varied rulers. The Stuart regime began, however, quite in the spirit of the Palace traditions, for here, during the first Christmas after James had ascended the English throne, there were grand festivities including the presentation of some of those masques then coming into vogue. Indeed, Daniel's *Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, presented in the Great Hall here by the Queen and her Ladies of Honour on 8 January, 1604, has been described as the first true masque in the literary sense. Many contemporary letters throw light on this Christmas celebration, when, if one letter writer is to be believed, as many as thirty masques and interludes were presented, when all the Court, the foreign ambassadors and their attendants thronged to Hampton Court. The twelve hundred rooms of the Palace did not suffice, many people had to put up in the outbuildings, while tents were erected in the park for a number of the servants—the fact that three or four people died daily in these tents from the plague (then ravaging London) does not appear to have been allowed to interfere with the festivities. There was tilting and running at the ring in the park and other diversions, but the masquings seem to have formed the most important part of the celebration, and of these, of course, the chief was that “Vision” in which the Queen took part in the Great Hall. King James sat in state on the dais by the great oriel window, spectators were presumably ranged in tiers along either side of the hall, and from a “heaven” above the Minstrels' Gallery the goddesses descended to their dancing on the floor of the hall. The “scenes” at either end of the hall were designed by no less notable a craftsman than Inigo Jones.<sup>[1]</sup>

[Pg 22]

That same month of January, 1604, which saw here such magnificent masquings saw also in Hampton Court a gathering of a very different kind—a gathering which, although it proved abortive so far as its particular purpose was concerned, yet had one remarkable consequence. Says Carlyle in his survey of the beginnings of the seventeenth-century preface to the Cromwell letters:

[Pg 23]

“In January, 1603-4, was held at Hampton Court a kind of Theological Convention of intense interest all over England ... now very dimly known, if at all known, as the ‘Hampton Court Conference’. It was a meeting for the



settlement of some dissentient humours in religion.... Four world-famous Doctors from Oxford and Cambridge represented the pious straitened class, now beginning to be generally conspicuous under the nickname *Puritans*. The Archbishop, the Bishop of London, also world-famous men, with a considerable reserve of other bishops, deans, and dignitaries, appeared for the Church by itself Church."

The one great consequence of the Conference was the undertaking of the Authorized Translation of the Bible; for the rest, the King eloquently "scouted to the wind" the Puritans, and threatened that if they did not conform he would hurry them out of the country. Thus early in the years of the Stuart rule may be said to have begun at Hampton Court that struggle between conformity and nonconformity which was to have momentous results later on in the same century.

When Charles the First succeeded his father as King, Hampton Court continued a favourite royal residence. This monarch appears to have had something of the same dread of the plague as inspired Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth, and when it broke out in London he hurriedly removed the Court to this Palace and issued a proclamation prohibiting all communication with the capital during the continuance of the visitation. He and his queen seem to have particularly favoured this one of their palaces, and not only made frequent stays here but continually added to the works of art and furnishings of the rooms.

[Pg 24]

Hampton Court was also to have its part in those later chapters of the life of the vacillating king which led up to the tragic finish at Whitehall. On 10 January, 1642, King Charles journeyed from London to Hampton and arrived here for the last time as a free king. The inevitable breaking-point had come, and hence he set forth to the early scenes of civil war. He was not at Hampton Court again until the August of 1647, and then it was virtually as a prisoner "in the power of those execrable villains", who had the courage to regard the welfare of the people before that of their titular ruler. Leaving his cloak in the gallery by way of diverting suspicion, on 11 November, 1647, the King "passed by the backstairs and vault to the waterside" and so made good his escape, and fled in a fashion that made any reconciliation of the opposing parties impossible.

In the beginning of 1649 came the culminating tragedy and two years later the manor of Hampton Court was sold to one John Phelps. The Palace itself was presumably not included in the transaction, for shortly afterwards it was occupied by Oliver Cromwell.

[Pg 25]

During the troubles between King and Parliament some damage was done at Hampton Court—damage which may well be deplored, but which will always be done by the least thoughtful in any such conflict. We may, to-day particularly, regret the destruction of the stained glass in the windows of the Great Hall, but in defence of the iconoclasts it must be remembered that stained glass was associated by them with those aspects of religion which they were banded together to overthrow. Destruction is one of the most persistent of primitive instincts, and should such an outbreak as that of the sixteenth century occur again—there would again be wanton destruction.

Under the Commonwealth Hampton Court of course saw none of the pageantry to which kings and queens had accustomed it, but on 18 November, 1657, it was here that Oliver Cromwell's daughter, Mary, was married to Lord Falconbridge, and the nuptials were honoured with "Two Songs" from the pen of Andrew Marvell, in one of which the poet used the courtly conceit applicable to a November marriage of:

"They have chosen such an hour  
When she is the only flower."

In August of the following year the Protector's other daughter, his favourite one, it is said, Mrs. Elizabeth Claypole, died at Hampton Court, and the grieved father was taken ill of the malady of which less than a month later he died at Whitehall. In the *Journal* of Fox the Quaker occurs the following striking passage about a meeting with Cromwell. "I met him riding into Hampton Court Park, and before I came to him, as he rode at the head of his life guard, I saw and felt a waft of death go forth against him, and when I came to him he looked like a dead man."

[Pg 26]



[See larger image](#)

### MASTER CARPENTER'S COURT

After Oliver Cromwell's death it was proposed that Hampton Court Palace should be sold, but the supporters of the Commonwealth under Richard Cromwell were at loggerheads on the subject, one party thinking that the place should be reserved "for the retirement of those that were engaged in Public affairs, when they should be indisposed in the summer season", the other, "that such places might justly be accounted amongst those things that prove temptations to ambitious men, and exceedingly tend to sharpen their appetite to ascend the Throne". To-day we may say that it is fortunate that the first party won the day, and the Parliament duly ordered "that the House called Hampton Court, with the outhouses and gardens thereunto belonging, and the little park where it stands, be stayed from sale, until the Parliament takes further order". Still the Parliament men were evidently determined that the view taken by those who regarded such places as temptations to power should not be forgotten, for Richard Cromwell was formally taken to task for having the temerity to go to Hampton to hunt the deer! Then, despite the temptation it might prove, the Long Parliament offered Hampton Court to General Monck, but that astute man, thinking it a dangerous gift, would accept no more than the custody and stewardship of it for life—and was thus able to hand it over to Charles the Second on the accomplishment of that Restoration, in which he probably already regarded himself as an important factor.

[Pg 27]

Under the restored Stuarts the Palace became once more the scene of brilliant Court doings. Here King Charles brought his bride, Catherine of Braganza, and here took place the contest which preceded that Queen's acceptance of Charles's mistress, Lady Castlemaine, as one of her attendant ladies. An important development of the surroundings of the Palace was made by Charles the Second in slightly shortening the Long Canal and bordering it with avenues of limes, thus providing for later generations a lovely vista from the east front of the buildings.

Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, the diverse diarists to whom we owe so much of our intimate knowledge of their time, were both frequently here, and both have left us characteristic passages about it; Evelyn enlarging upon the art treasures and the gardens, Pepys noting that "it was pretty to see the young, pretty ladies".

[Pg 28]

#### FOOTNOTE:

- [1] In the preface to his reprint of Daniel's Masque, Mr. Ernest Law has pieced together, from contemporary letters and other documents, a very full account of a scene the splendour of which can be but hinted at here.

It is with the coming of William the Third and Mary to rule the kingdom, a work for which James the Second had proved himself unfit, that Hampton Court came to be formed as we know it now. King James seems never to have stayed in the Palace after his accession, but his daughter and her husband soon made of it a favourite and favoured residence. It is to William and Mary that the Palace owes its beautiful galleries and many of the art treasures in them. Calling to his aid Sir Christopher Wren, King William resolved to rebuild a large part of the great Tudor palace, and mould it nearer to his heart's desire. A considerable part of the place was entirely demolished, comprising the whole series of buildings around the Cloister Green Court, and forming the south-eastern portion in which were the royal rooms that formed the residential centre of the extensive palace. Where this large part of the old edifice had been razed Wren erected, in striking contrast to the Tudor portions left standing north and west of it, the Renaissance building, which is probably remembered by many visitors as the chief feature of Hampton Court. Contrasting strongly with the earlier portions of the Palace the new fronts and the beautiful Fountain Court yet do not clash with them, thanks to the way in which the architect carried out his work.

[Pg 29]

While the new additions were being made to the Palace King William and Queen Mary frequently stayed at Hampton Court, the Water Gallery—a detached portion of the Tudor buildings standing on the riverside at the end of what is now the Broad Walk—being furnished and decorated to afford a temporary residence. Not only were the State Chambers rebuilt in this reign, but the gardens were newly laid out and planted—a work in which the Queen greatly interested herself. Despite these vast changes yet more were contemplated, for Sir Christopher Wren had planned a new approach and entrance on the north side. Her Majesty did not live to occupy the State Apartments, and her death in 1694 delayed for several years the completion of the work. As for King William, he, too, did not live long to enjoy his new palace, for having come hither on 21 February, 1702, from Kensington Palace for a day's hunting, his horse stumbled—presumably in Hampton Court Park—throwing the King so that he broke his collar bone. William had for some time been suffering in health, but when the broken bone was set he insisted on returning to Kensington, and there he died on 8 March, just over a fortnight later.

[Pg 30]

Queen Anne was at Hampton Court many times during her reign of a dozen years, but the story of that reign is not much associated with the Palace, though that association is immortalized in a couplet of Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, the scene of which comedy-narrative is set here. Here the bold baron of the poem cut one of the tempting locks from the fair Belinda's head, and a family feud followed which was only stopped by Pope's delightful poem.

With the coming of the Hanoverians the importance of the Palace as a Court centre dwindled. It is true that George the First and his son, while Prince of Wales, were often at Hampton Court, and that the latter when he became George the Second carried out a number of minor alterations; but the place became less regularly and less notably a centre of royal pageantry, though it was more than once made the centre of state theatrical performances. King George the Third never took up his residence here at all, owing, it is said, to the fact that it was here that his grandfather had boxed his ears! It was, indeed, during his long reign that the removal of many furnishings of the Palace, and the systematic allotting of suites of rooms to people who had some claim on royal gratitude took place. After the death of George the Second Hampton Court ceased to be used as a royal residence, and shortly after the accession of Queen Victoria the State Apartments were thrown open to the public, and the Palace gradually came to be recognized as one of the most delightful and interesting centres of historical association within easy reach of the metropolis.

[Pg 31]

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## V

It has been seen that Hampton Court Palace has associations—often peculiar and intimate associations—with our monarchs for close upon three hundred years. In the first two chief courts, in the Great Hall, the kitchens, the old cloisters, and the courts along the north side of the building, it is not a difficult effort of the imagination that is required to make us see it as it was in the brightly-attired days of Tudor splendour and lavishness; to make us realize the arrival in one of the courts of some noble company, when the great Cardinal was entertaining and when King Henry was setting forth hunting; to make us realize the hurrying of the cooks and their minions in the corridors and cloisters about the great kitchens, the knots of idlers and retainers in the lesser courts. In the later portions of the Palace, the Fountain Court and the State Chambers, we may, "with the mind's eye", see something of the more formal brightness of a later day, may see the beaux and beauties of the early eighteenth century promenading or "taking tea" with "proud Anna whom three realms obey".

[Pg 32]

The casual visitor to Hampton Court probably carries away two or three definite impressions of the place, of a medley of decorated chimneystacks, of warm red brick, of cool quadrangles, of broad lawns and blazing flower beds, of an outlook over a boat-dotted river, of galleries filled with a bewildering succession of old paintings, of tapestried walls—and of the whole set amid stretching tree-grown levels. It is, however, necessary to know the place closely to appreciate it fully—it grows upon one, as the saying is; we should have seen the homely court of the Master Carpenter as well as the stately Fountain Court, the sculptures in the gardens as well as the encyclopædic clock, the kitchens as well as the picture galleries, to have lingered about the

Wilderness in the spring as well as to have seen the Broad Walk in the blaze of summer, to have visited in some of the residences as well as to have passed through the public galleries, to have been about it at all seasons and not merely to have scampered through it as the central incident in a half-day's excursion. It is, indeed, properly a place for restful enjoyment rather than for hurried sightseeing; though a hurried glimpse may well prove a provocation to further visits and more leisurely inspection.

[Pg 33]



[See larger image](#)

### FOUNTAIN COURT

Perhaps in beginning a ramble about the Palace and its grounds it may be assumed that most people arrive by railway at the station which, though it is in East Molesey at the Surrey end of the bridge, takes its name from the palace on the Middlesex bank. This means that they enter it—as also do those who journey from London by tramcar—at the Trophy Gate, and have before them at once, at the end of a broad gravel walk, the Outer Court and the rich red-brick medley of the Tudor buildings, to which the eye is led by the severely plain row of low barracks on the left, and a row of fine elms along the towing path on the right. Here, at the west front, the recently-cleared moat at once attracts attention. Until within the past year or two the gravel forecourt extended right up to the palace walls, but excavation revealed that the course of the moat, and the very walls of the moat, and the old bridge approach to the Gatehouse were still plainly traceable. The rubbish with which long since the moat had been filled—possibly when William the Third made his alterations to the Palace, or perhaps even earlier—was cleared away, the brick sides revealed, the bottom of the moat neatly turfed over, and a parapet with shield-bearing heraldical beasts erected on either side. These heraldical beasts, it must be admitted—whether a restoration in accordance with an old design or not—tend to spoil the approach to the Great Gatehouse, for the whole would have gained in dignity had they been omitted and the plain low castellated wall remained unadorned. The similar banner-bearing heraldical beasts along the roof of the Great Hall look far better on the skyline—but their fellows on the eyeline below mar the dignity of the approach considerably.

[Pg 34]

The beautiful red brickwork, the various castellated turrets, and the clusters of decorated chimneys, with the quaintly carved beasts seemingly tobogganing down the gables of the wings, together form a fine example of Tudor architecture, though the appearance would have been still better had the Gatehouse when restored in the eighteenth century been kept to its original proportions, and had the leaden cupolas not been removed from the many turrets. Two or three of those turrets that remain in other parts of the buildings retain their cupolas, to indicate how fine must have been the whole effect before any had been removed. In the wall of either tower of the gateway is to be seen a terra-cotta medallion portrait of one of the Cæsars, others of which will be noticed in the succeeding courts.

[Pg 35]

The wing to the right as we front the Gatehouse is the south-west wing and is worthy of special mention before entering the buildings, for there one of Hampton Court's ghosts has been given to manifesting itself. This is the ghost of Mistress Penn who was nurse to Edward the Sixth. An elaborate and circumstantial story tells of the sound being heard of a ghostly spinning-wheel, and when search was made by the officials a small sealed-up chamber was revealed, containing

nothing but a spinning-wheel and a chair!

Entering through the Great Gatehouse—where, though the Palace is no longer used as a residence by the royal family, a sentry is always on guard—we reach the First Green Court or Base Court—a peaceful quadrangle surrounded by low red buildings with the western end of the Great Hall fronting us to the left. This, the only turfed “quad”, is the largest of them all. In the surrounding rooms are supposed to have been many of the chambers which Wolsey allotted to his guests when they came in such numbers as are indicated in the passage already quoted from Master George Cavendish. Opposite us is the end of the Great Hall to the left, and directly in front is the clock gatehouse on either turret of which is to be observed one of those terra-cotta plaques of the Roman Emperors which were at one time thought to have been the work of Della Robbia, and to have been presented to Wolsey when he was building, but which Mr. Law has shown to be the work of Joannes Maiano and to have been ordered by the Cardinal. This gate is known as Anne Boleyn’s Gateway, in the groined ceiling (restored) of which as we pass beneath are to be noticed around a central Tudor rose the monograms of that unhappy Queen, Henry the Eighth, and “T. C.” repeated alternately with them—the last-mentioned initials may well puzzle the visitor who does not know that they stand for Thomas Cardinal, a designation which Wolsey was fond of employing.

[Pg 36]

A broad flight of steps to the left leads upwards from Anne Boleyn’s Gateway to the Great Hall, but before proceeding thither most visitors will wish to look into the Clock Court beyond. In this Court we get the greatest clashing of the two periods to which the Palace as we know it to-day belongs. On the left, or north side, is the buttressed wall of the Great Hall with above the pinnacles surmounted by the heraldical beasts already referred to; while on the right is a colonnade masking the Tudor buildings on that side—Wolsey’s own apartments—in most incongruous fashion. Beneath that colonnade is the entrance to the King’s Grand Staircase and so to the State Rooms now known as the Picture Galleries.

Looking back at the gateway through which we have come we see the wonderful clock—a veritable horological encyclopædia—which, after lying long neglected, was in the latter part of last century restored to its original position and set going. It was first put up in 1540 and is a remarkable survival from that time—though everything but the dial has been renewed—seeing that we can now ascertain from it, according to Mr. Ernest Law—though but few visitors are likely to seek to obtain all this information from it—“the hour, the month, the day of the month, the position of the sun in the ecliptic, the number of days since the beginning of the year, the phase of the moon, its age in days, the hour of the day at which it souths (that is crosses the meridian), and thence the time of highwater at London Bridge”. It may be said that the clock needs a deal of learning, and those who merely wish to know the time of day can find it more expeditiously by consulting the conventional dial that fronts on the Base Court.

[Pg 37]

Two interesting matters connected with the astronomical clock are worthy of passing mention—one is that its bell which strikes the hours is probably the oldest thing about the Palace, for it goes back to some years before Wolsey acquired the manor, and is mentioned among the properties at the place where he purchased it; and the other is that ever since the clock struck the hour at which Anne of Denmark, the Queen of James the First, passed away in 1619 it is said to have stopped whenever an old resident of the Palace has died. Those curious in such matters declare, according to the historian of the Palace, that there have been many coincidences in support of this superstition. Perhaps the custom grew up of stopping the clock on the occasion of a death. Beneath the dial is to be seen an elaborate piece of relief sculpture in terra-cotta representing the coat of arms of Wolsey supported by plump cherubs and surmounted by the Cardinal’s hat, the monogram “T. W.”, and the date 1525—presumably the date of the completion of this gateway.

[Pg 38]

On the farther side of the Clock Court is the entrance to the Queen’s Staircase, on passing through the hall at the foot of which we come to the Chapel and the Fountain Court. At the entrance are two more of the terra-cotta plaques to which reference has already been made.





[See larger image](#)

## THE GREAT HALL

Turning back for a time to Anne Boleyn's Gateway we may follow the steps up to the Great Hall, and entering from beneath the Minstrels' Gallery at a doorway through an elaborately carved screen, we see at once before us one of the finest and most impressive of Tudor halls—very similar to but not quite so large as that of Christ Church at Oxford. Whether we look up towards the dais as we enter from under the Minstrels' Gallery, or whether standing on the dais—raised but a few inches from the general level of the hall—we look back towards the Minstrels' Gallery and the blue west window above it—it is a grand and pleasing view that we get. The tapestried walls, the high windows, and the fine Perpendicular hammer-beam roof together form a magnificent and pleasing whole, one of the noblest halls of its period that the country has to show. The tapestries, in which are depicted incidents in the life of Abraham—though time has dimmed somewhat the splendour of their colouring—are yet remarkable links with Tudor times, for they were purchased by Henry the Eighth and have remained at Hampton Court ever since the period of their acquisition. Though much restoration was done in the middle of last century the general character of the whole was not interfered with. Then it was that the stained glass was put in—to replace that which had presumably been destroyed during the times “when civil dudgeon first grew high and men fell out they knew not why”—and we may well be grateful that the taste displayed in doing so was on the whole so well displayed, though the garish blue of the western window above the Minstrels' Gallery is perhaps an exception to that taste. The great oriel window at the southern end of the dais, with the beautiful groining above cannot fail to attract attention, and looking back from the dais down the Hall we may notice the elaboration and richness of the magnificent roof, which is acknowledged to be probably the most splendid roof of the kind ever erected in England.

[Pg 39]

[Pg 40]

Though we see the Hall to-day with but a few sightseers in it, it needs no great effort of imagination to repeople it with figures of the past; to recall the time when it was a centre of Tudor revellings, or when King James sat in his chair by the great oriel or Bay Window and saw the “goddesses” descend from the “heaven” above the Minstrels' Gallery to carry on their masquings below. At the farther end of the dais is a door, now covered over, leading to the antechamber known as the Horn Room.

A doorway in the eastern end of the Hall from the centre of the dais gives into the Great Watching Chamber which runs at right angles to it. This also is one of Henry the Eighth's contributions to the Palace, and with its richly ornamented roof, its wonderfully elaborate old tapestries may be regarded as one of the most fascinating and interesting parts of it. Indeed, if we except the Great Hall itself, this is the most remarkable part of the Tudor edifice that remains. According to an old engraving it was in this chamber that Cardinal Wolsey entertained the French ambassadors at the sumptuous banquet referred to earlier.

[Pg 41]

The tapestries here, representing the Triumphs of Renown, Time, and Fate, are particularly interesting as they form part of a series bought by Cardinal Wolsey in 1523 and have been hanging at Hampton Court for close upon four hundred years. They are old Flemish work, and should be supplemented by three others if the set were complete. These wonderful examples of

ancient "art needlework" are the more interesting from the fact of their being links with the original Palace. It should be remembered to Cromwell's credit that, though they were duly valued as among the available Crown assets, he refused to permit of their removal, and thus we have in them one of the most notable links with the gorgeous past of Hampton Court. At the farther end of the Great Watching Chamber is a small room—the Horn Room—with stairs leading down to the cloisters and kitchens, and with the closed doorway giving on to the northern end of the dais in the Great Hall.

Before passing on into the Orange part of the buildings, the State Rooms and Picture Galleries, we may retrace our steps to the outer court, at the north side of which, passing under an archway, we go through the delightful series of courts along the north side of the Palace—the Lord Chamberlain's Court, the Master Carpenter's Court, and others. Here are to be seen the narrow, irregular side courts of the old Tudor buildings, and remnants of the past in old lead water pipes, and in the heraldical beasts along the roof of the Great Hall which are most effectively seen from the Master Carpenter's Court, through which we gain access to the cloisters and the ancient kitchens. The kitchens, which unfortunately are not thrown open to the public, are much as they were in olden days, and afford a curious and interesting glimpse of old-time domestic conditions, with their great fireplaces and their "hatches", through which the dishes were passed to the servers whose duty it was to take them to the dining-hall.

[Pg 42]

Continuing past the kitchens the passage turns to the right and comes out at the north-west angle of the Fountain Court, before reaching which point, however, the entrance to the Chapel is passed on the left. On either side of the Chapel door are to be seen, carved, coloured, and gilt, the arms of Henry the Eighth and Seymour with the initials of the King and the Queen (of the moment) united by a true lover's knot. The true lover's knot was but a slip knot to the fickle king, the Queen Jane's arms and cipher but replaced the earlier ones of Anne's.



[See larger image](#)

### **THE POND GARDEN**

The present chapel was one of King Henry's additions—Wolsey's original chapel being either entirely demolished or so altered as to be made anew. It has been surmised that had the great Churchman's edifice remained it would have been something externally beautiful and notable, whereas the present building is so much hidden that I have more than once known visitors to point out the Great Hall as being the Chapel. If the King did not make much of the Chapel externally, he lavished attention on it internally, so that a German visitor toward the close of the sixteenth century was able to wax enthusiastic as to its splendour. Above the public entrance near the Fountain Court is the great Royal Pew—entered from the Haunted Gallery—with a painted ceiling.

[Pg 43]

Though the Chapel dates from Tudor times, it must be remembered that its interior was rearranged and redecorated in the reign of Queen Anne, and that those responsible for the work were by no means hampered by any pedantic ideas of congruity. A matter of grievance to many visitors is that the Chapel is not thrown open to the public. It can only be seen at service time.

## VI

Entirely different is the impression which we take away with us of the Orange portion of Hampton Court Palace from that which remains in memory of the Tudor parts. From the west and north we see nothing but the medley of red brickwork, gables, turrets, and irregular chimneystacks. From the east and south sides we get views that contrast greatly with those of the older portions. Here we have long straight fronts broken with many stone-framed windows, and surmounted by a regular stone parapet that quite inadequately masks the more modern chimneystacks. These south and west fronts are sometimes criticized by those who regret the parts of the Tudor palace demolished to make room for them, but they are by no means wanting in either dignity or beauty. Their red brick—less rich in tone than that of the Tudor buildings—is much broken with white stone ornamentation, and the southern side as seen from the gardens through massed shrubs is particularly fine. This part of the palace probably remains in the memory of most visitors as being Hampton Court, and it is only natural that it should be so, for it is the portion mainly seen from the grounds, and it is the portion with which visitors make the most intimate acquaintance—for within it, on the first floor, are the many State Rooms in which are hung the magnificent collection of pictures.

[Pg 44]

To reach the State Rooms, as has been said, we enter the Clock Court and catering across it to the right pass under the colonnade which uglifies the front of Wolsey's rooms, and so come to the King's Great Staircase by which the public reaches the galleries. This staircase, its walls and ceiling painted by Verrio, has on the whole a somewhat sombre and certainly unpleasing effect. It is true that we have in it one of the most notable examples of Verrio's decorative achievements, but it is an example which I frankly find unattractive. It is sombrely gorgeous but in an unrestful fashion, with its sprawling gods, goddesses, and heroes in all manner of impossible positions, its pillars overhung with clouds or clouds swooping down, as though weighted with the figures, about the pillars. Beneath in a brownish tone are painted various "trophies". The art of decoration, one cannot help feeling, was at the time that William the Third had this staircase painted, at a very low ebb indeed.

[Pg 45]

Curiosity may make some visitors pause to single out from the medley the figures of the Fates, the Cæsars, or particular gods and goddesses, but most will pass on into the noble King's Guard Room with its wonderful mural decoration of muskets, pikes, and pistols. Though there are some pictures here—notably, opposite the fireplace, a large portrait by Zucchero of Queen Elizabeth's porter—it is chiefly the old arms marvellously arrayed in diverse patterns that take the eye. Upwards of a thousand pieces are said to have been utilized in decorating this room—their arrangement being made by a gunsmith who had earlier done similar work at Windsor Castle and the Tower of London. It may be added that he utilized his materials more successfully than did Verrio in painting the staircase, and it is pleasant to learn that Gunsmith Harris's work was so well appreciated that he was granted a pension by way of reward. From the tall windows at the farther end of the Guard Room we look out over the Privy Garden to the river, with the terraced Queen Mary's Bower on the right.

[Pg 46]

It is not necessary to describe in detail the things to be seen in the long succession of State Rooms, from the entrance to them by the King's Great Staircase to the exit by the Queen's Great Staircase. Varying in size in accordance to the purpose for which they were designed, audience rooms, bedrooms, writing closets, or galleries, all are lofty rooms, and some of the smallest are the most crowded with pictures—as, for example, the Queen Mary's closet—leaving which we pass from the rooms that occupy the first floor of the south front to those of the rather longer east front. Details as to the paintings, tapestries, or furnishings would alone occupy more than the space of this little book, and the visitor in search of such details will find them in the official handbooks. The tall windows, rising from the window seat level, and affording beautiful views of the grounds, form a feature of the Orange portion of the buildings, which shows a distinct advance upon the earlier style of fenestration—picturesque as are the smaller type of windows of the Tudor period.

[Pg 47]



## EAST FRONT FROM THE LONG WATER

The southern range of rooms formed the King's suite, and passing from the Guard Room, we go successively through: the First Presence Chamber, in which are to be seen Sir Godfrey Kneller's "Beauties" of the Orange Court; the Second Presence Chamber, the most memorable thing in which is Van Dyck's fine equestrian portrait of Charles the First; the Audience Chamber with a portrait of Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, over the fireplace; the King's Drawing Room; King William's Bedroom, with an ornate ceiling painted by Sir William Thornhill, and the great canopied bed with time-worn crimson silk hangings; the King's Dressing Room, in which are several Holbeins including two portraits of Henry the Eighth; and the last of King William's rooms, the Writing Closet, in which are to be seen Zuccherò's portrait of Queen Elizabeth in fancy dress, also a smaller one of her, and a remarkable full length of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, in scarlet costume.

Turning at an angle through Queen Mary's closet we pass on to inspect the series of rooms which Her Majesty did not live to occupy, and from the generous windows we get beautiful views of the yew-grown lawns and the park beyond—the view straight up the Long Canal from the Queen's Drawing Room is particularly fine, especially when the broad gravel walks between theavenued yews are dotted with summer visitors, and the beds are gorgeous with many flowers set in the wide greenery of the lawn. Before reaching the Drawing Room we come to the Queen's Gallery, hung with rich tapestry and ornamented with splendid china vases, and the Queen's Bed Room, the bed hung with remarkably fresh-looking ornate hangings in red and gold. Beyond the Drawing Room are the Queen's Audience Chamber, the Public Drawing Room, and at the end of the eastern front the Prince of Wales' suite.

[Pg 48]

Through the farther end of the Drawing Room is the Queen's Presence Chamber, with another magnificent canopied bed, and beyond it, the Queen's Guard Room, giving on to the stairs. These last two rooms look out on to the Fountain Court, of which they form the northern side, but they do not exhaust the rooms open to public inspection; for along the eastern side of the Court is a series of smaller rooms, containing further pictures and furnishings. Owing to the smallness of these rooms, their darkness, and the fact that visitors can only pass straight through them from door to door, close inspection of the pictures is not easy. Along the whole length of the southern side of the Fountain Court is the King's Gallery or Great Council Chamber—a magnificent room in which used to hang the Raphael Cartoons now at South Kensington. The room was, indeed, designed by Sir Christopher Wren as a setting for those famous pictures; and the walls are now covered by reproductions of them in tapestry. On the west side of the Court is the Communication Gallery leading to the Queen's Great Staircase, and it is worthy of note that from the last of the State Rooms the visitor should carry away impressions of one of the most splendid of Hampton Court's many splendid art treasures. Along the wall here are the nine large tempera pictures by Mantegna—"one of the chief heroes in the advance of painting in Italy"—in which are represented "The Triumph of Cæsar". Says Mr. William Michael Rossetti, "these superbly invented and designed compositions, gorgeous with all splendour of subject-matter and accessory, and with the classical learning and enthusiasm of one of the master spirits of the age, have always been accounted of the first rank among Mantegna's works". Though in part restored, these paintings, by an artist who died more than four hundred years ago, are full of interest for their vivid presentation of a rich imagination of a great historical event. In front of the victor—in the last of this series of paintings—is borne a device bearing his famous words "Veni, Vidi, Vici"—and it is worthy of recollection that one tradition places the scene of Julius Cæsar's final victory over the Britons at Kingston, not far from where this splendid delineation of his triumphal pageant on his return to Rome has hung for close upon three centuries. Though it is a fine final memory to bring away from the rooms, it is perhaps to be regretted that this series of paintings is in the last of the galleries through which we pass; for, as I have learned from various visitors—after going through more than a couple of dozen rooms and galleries, housing about a thousand pictures, and tapestries besides other articles of interest—the eye has become wearied and the mind overcharged with an embarrassment of riches. Several people have told me that they have come through these last galleries scarce noticing what was on the walls at all. It is a pity that the rule of having to pass through the rooms always in one order cannot be maintained only on Sundays, holidays, and such days as there are crowds, when such order is necessary for the comfort of all; at other times, when there are but few people about, it might surely be permissible to enter or leave the State Rooms by either of the great staircases.

[Pg 49]

[Pg 50]





[See larger image](#)

### THE WILDERNESS IN SPRING

Of the riches of art in the Palace this is not the place to speak in detail, it is only possible to hint at them. Before leaving the Communication Gallery for the exit staircase there are small rooms to the left which call for inspection—rooms which not only mark internally the linking of the original Tudor Palace with the Orange additions, but which also are traditionally associated with the builder of the Palace himself, for here is Wolsey's Closet. In the outer lobby the most interesting object is the drawing (after Wynegaarde) of Hampton Court Palace as seen from the Thames in 1558. From this may be noted the extent of building demolished, or masked, when Wren carried out his work of rebuilding for William the Third. The Closet is chiefly notable for its beautiful ceiling, its mullioned window, and its fine linen-fold panelling which, however, though of old workmanship, has been brought together here from various parts of the Palace. The room is supposed, from the frieze, to have been at one time much larger than it now is. In the corner, between fireplace and window, is a small room, sometimes described as an oratory. Though other of Wolsey's rooms remain, they are part of the private apartments of the Palace, and not, of course, accessible to visitors, and this small Closet and its lobbies is, therefore, worth lingering over.

[Pg 51]

During the latter part of a promenade through the State Rooms, as has been pointed out, we go practically round the four sides of the Fountain Court, and when descending the stairs and leaving the hall below them, we find ourselves in the north-western corner of the Cloisters that surround the Court. Entirely differing from the Tudor ones, this is the most impressive of all the courts here, with its cloisters surrounding a quadrangle of greenery in the midst of which a fountain plays. Whether looked at from the gallery windows, where the plashing of the water may be heard on a summer day, or examined in our walk round the Cloisters, the Fountain Court is a beautiful and restful place, which, with its surrounding of untrodden grass—starred in spring with myriad daisies—forms a delightful contrast to the white cloister pillars and the red brick walls above. Over the windows of the King's Gallery on the south side are a dozen round, false windows, filled with time and atmosphere darkened paintings. These paintings, now but dimly discernible as such, were the work of Louis Laguerre, who had been employed in "restoring" the Mantegna "Triumph" in the Communication Gallery, who was very highly esteemed as an artist by William the Third, and who was granted by that monarch apartments in Hampton Court. Probably these pictures, representing the Twelve Labours of Hercules, are beyond fresh restoration, otherwise they might presumably be cleaned and glazed to save them from disappearing completely. Laguerre is said also to be responsible for the painting of imitation windows in similar circular spaces on the south front of the Palace—imitations which are frankly hideous. The spaces would look far better if filled with plain brick or stone. Perhaps some of these spaces being occupied with practical windows, it was thought necessary for the sake of symmetry to make the rest appear such to the casual glance. Around the Fountain Court—along the north cloister of which the public way passes to the gardens—are entrances to various apartments allotted to private residents. On the east side flights of steps go up to the two private suites, known as the Gold Staff Gallery, at the south-eastern corner of the Palace above the State Rooms. One of these suites—at the south-east angle—is interesting as being the one in which, according to tradition, took place that "Rape of the Lock", which Pope was to celebrate in the

[Pg 52]

[Pg 53]



most remarkable poem of its kind in the language. Hither came the fair Belinda—Arabella Fermor—to play that game of ombre which the poet was to make famous; and here, her triumph at cards achieved, she was taking coffee—

“For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crowned  
The berries crackle and the mill turns round”—

when “the Peer”, Lord Petre, “spreads the glittering forfex wide” and snips off the lock of hair!

“Then flash’d the living lightning from her eyes,  
And screams of horror rend th’ affrighted skies.  
Not louder shrieks to pitying heav’n are cast,  
When husbands or when lapdogs breathe their last,  
Or when rich china vessels fall’n from high  
In glitt’ring dust and painted fragments lie!”

[Pg 54]

The Gold Staff Gallery has tragedy as well as comedy in its history, for at one time the other suite formed out of it—that facing south—was occupied by Richard Tickell, grandson of that Thomas Tickell, who, though a poet of some note in his day, is chiefly remembered from his association with Addison. Richard Tickell, who was also a poet and political writer, married as his first wife the beautiful Mary Linley, sister-in-law of Sheridan. On 4 November, 1793, Tickell—who appears to have been financially embarrassed—threw himself from the window of one of his rooms here, and was killed instantly on the gravel path below. Though it was officially decided at the time—thanks, it is believed, to the influence of Sheridan—that it was an accidental death, the historians have no hesitation in describing the tragedy as suicide.



[See larger image](#)

## THE LONG WALK

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## VII

Fascinating as are the old courts and the galleries with their magnificent art collections, the grounds which surround the Palace are, in their way, no less enticing. Indeed, if we might judge by the thronging crowds in flower time, the gardens form for the majority of visitors the most attractive part of the place. These gardens, wonderfully varied and beautifully kept, are not by any means extensive for so noble a Palace, but they prove an unfailing delight. They are markedly divisible in character into three portions—the north where is the Wilderness and Maze; the south where are the Privy and Pond Gardens, the Great Vine House and Queen Mary’s Bower; and the east—or Great Fountain Garden—with its rich herbaceous border along the Broad Walk, its level lawns set with great jewels of floral colour, its compact yews, its radiating walks, its water-lily pond, and beyond the gleaming stretch of the Long Canal and the tall trees that border the Park. In all parts of these gardens are to be seen beauties that delight the eye and linger in the memory, and each of them successively draws the sightseers.

[Pg 55]

These gardens have seen many changes during the centuries of the Palace’s history, changes largely from one kind of formality to another, judging from the plans of them at various times. As I have said that the majority of visitors enter the Palace precincts by way of the Western Trophy Gate, and as such visitors would naturally reach the grounds by the eastern entrance beyond the cloistered Fountain Court, it may be well to say something first of the eastern gardens—which certainly, in summer, form the most florally gorgeous part of the whole. We come out here in the middle of the Broad Walk, which stretches from near the Kingston Road to the Thames’ side. In

[Pg 56]

front of us, bordered by old yew trees, are gravel walks radiating to the House or Home Park, the centre one leading, round a fountain pond starred in summer with lovely water lilies of various colours, to the head of the Long Canal, where are many water fowl—swans, geese, and ducks of different species—expectant of the visitors' contributions of bread or biscuit.

Right and left as we emerge from the Palace the Broad Walk stretches, inviting us in each direction with a brilliant display of many coloured flowers—more especially in spring and early summer, when the gardens, attractive at all times, are perhaps at their very best. Old plans of the grounds of Hampton Court show that these eastern gardens have seen the greatest changes during successive centuries. At one time the Long Canal stretched much closer to the Palace, and after it was shortened the intervening gardens were for a period a veritable maze of intricate ornamental beds with small fountains dotted about them; at another time they showed an array of formally cut pyramidal evergreens disposed along the sides of the walks.

It was probably the coming of William and Mary to Hampton Court that caused special attention to be paid to the grounds, for Queen Mary appears to have been greatly interested in the matter. Many and various as have been the re-plannings it may be believed that never have the gardens looked better than at present, when taste in things floricultural has broken away from the formalism of scroll-pattern borders and indulgence in the eccentricities of topiarian art—is even, it is to be hoped, on the way to free itself finally from the ugliness of “carpet bedding”—when plants are largely grouped and massed instead of being placed in alternate kinds at regular intervals in geometrical patterns. Present day taste with its appreciation of garden colour, of masses and groups of particular kinds, instead of isolated plants dotted about with irritating regularity, is found beautifully exemplified in the numerous beds cut in the lawns of the eastern gardens, and in the long borders which run north and south of the palace along one side of the Broad Walk. Here, from the beginning of the year, when the patches of cerulean, “glory of the snow”, and of low-growing irises of a deeper blue, begin that procession which is soon to develop into a very pageantry of colour—from when myriad yellow crocuses first star the lawns with gold in February—is given a succession of changes that may well tempt the lover of gardens to Hampton Court again and again. These beds and borders with their succession of spring bulbs and summer flowers, their brilliant annuals and massed perennials are not only a delight to the eyes of all, but that they afford endless hints, are as it were horticulturally educational to garden-loving visitors, may be gathered from the frequency with which such visitors are seen to consult the name-labels of the various plants.

[Pg 57]

[Pg 58]

The southern end of the Broad Walk is semi-circular with an outlook over the river, upwards, to where Molesey Lock and Weir are cut from view by the hideous Hampton Court Bridge, and downwards, towards Thames Ditton and Kingston. It is one of the most charming views on the river near London, the many trees on islands and banks shutting off the neighbouring town. On a hot summer day, the decorated houseboats moored to the Surrey bank and the innumerable small craft passing up and down help to form a delightful and characteristic bit of the Stream of Pleasure. That the view is one that is well appreciated is shown by the fact that on such an afternoon the Water Gallery, as this view point is named, generally attracts and holds many of the visitors to the Palace.



[See larger image](#)

### THE LONG WATER IN WINTER

The name of the Water Gallery survives from that of the building which at one time stood here, the “dépendance” which Queen Mary occupied while the Palace was being rebuilt, and which was demolished when the alterations were completed. East from this point runs the Long Walk, parallel with, but well above, the towing path, and affording a good view along the river on one hand and glimpses of the park on the other. This walk led to the old Bowling Green and Pavilions. Some distance along it a gate gives on to the towing path leading to Kingston Bridge.

[Pg 59]

South of the Palace—shut off from the eastern gardens by a climber-covered wall—is the smaller but very beautiful Privy Garden, with its turf-banked terraces on either side, its sunken centre filled with a wonderful variety of shrubs and trees. From the terrace walk on the left we may look over the wall to the eastern gardens and park; along the right-hand terrace is formed Queen Mary's Bower, an intertwined avenue of trimmed and cut wych-elsms, some of the distorted trunks of which might have inspired more than one of Doré's Dante illustrations. This shady bower is in summer particularly delightful, and from the farther end of it is to be had, through and above the evergreens of this Privy Garden, a beautiful view of the south front of the Palace. At the farther end of the Privy Garden, fencing it from the towing path, are some magnificent iron gates and screens.

Along the gravel walk, immediately against the south front of the Palace, are ranged in summer great tubs with orange trees, believed to be those originally planted here by Queen Mary—though it is not easy to realize that they are over three hundred years old! And close to this wall of the Palace stand two heroic Statues, Hercules with his club, and another; it might be thought, half of the quartette of figures that, as old views of the Palace show, at one time stood on the low columns which rise above the balustrading of the roof, only that quartette is said to have consisted of goddesses, since removed to Windsor. In an old engraving, dated 1815, two figures are still to be seen on the skyline.

[Pg 60]

Beyond the steps up to Queen Mary's Bower, a gateway leads us to the farther Privy Gardens. On the right may be observed where Wren's additions end abruptly against the windows of Queen Elizabeth's Chambers, and her monogram is to be seen carved boldly above the first-floor window in a decorative ribbon pattern, while above the second-floor window are her initials beside a crowned Tudor rose, each carving having the date 1568.

Here we are in the Pond Garden—or series of gardens—on the right, over a low old wall, is a small turfed and flower grown enclosure with the long Orangery at the farther side. On the left is a close grown hedge, beyond which are a succession of small garden enclosures, only the centre one of which is kept up as a show place, and this is the delightful quadrangular enclosed space sometimes spoken of as the Dutch Garden. This sunk garden, with its turf, its stone walks, that are not walked upon, its small evergreens, cut by topiarian art into the semblance of birds, its low-growing plants rich in varicoloured flowers, its evergreen arbour at the farther end as a background to a statue of Venus, its little fountain in the centre, is a spot that always attracts visitors—attracts and holds them by its spell of quiet beauty.

[Pg 61]

At the farther end of the gravel walk is the glasshouse in which for close upon a hundred and fifty years has flourished the great grape vine, which always proves an enormous attraction to those who come to see the Palace. The vine—a Black Hamburg—was planted in 1768, and it annually bears about twelve hundred bunches of grapes, many incipient bunches being removed in accordance with the custom of viticulture to allow the rest to mature the better. The vine has been known to bear well over two thousand pounds weight—or about a ton—of grapes in a single season. It is not, however, though sometimes so described, the largest grape vine in England.

To the north of the Palace—reached by a gate in the wall of the Long Walk, or first seen by those who come to Hampton Court Palace through the Lion Gate—is the Wilderness, a half-cultivated place contrasting greatly with the parts of the grounds that we have already been visiting. Here are tall trees of various kinds, massed shrubs, and broad stretches of turf spangled with daffodils and other bulbs in the spring; within it is a smaller wilderness overlooked by many visitors forming a kind of wild garden, its many flowers growing upon the rocky banked sides of the tortuous paths, with groups of slender bamboo, flowering shrubs and brambles,—a place which is particularly fascinating in the late springtime.

[Pg 62]

Here, too, close to the Lion Gate, is that Maze which is always a popular feature with holiday-makers old and young. Between the Wilderness and the Palace lies the Old Melon Ground, now apparently utilized by the gardeners whose incessant work maintains the grounds of Hampton Court in so beautiful a state. West of the Wilderness is the Old Tilt Yard, long since given over from joustings and tiltings to the cultivation of plants, and not open to the public.

To go back to the eastern garden, we see at its farther edge the lime avenue, with beyond it the Home Park, the two separated by shady canals well grown with gorgeous water lilies and bordered by clumps of fine foliage plants. It was presumably in the Park near here that George Cavendish found Henry the Eighth engaged at archery practice when he came to tell him of the death of Wolsey. It was in this Park, at the farther end near Kingston Bridge, that Fox saw Oliver Cromwell just before his fatal seizure, and it was in this Park, it is believed, that the tripping of his horse over a molehill caused William the Third's fatal fall. Just across the road bordering the northern boundary of the Palace grounds lies the great extent of Bushy Park, with its magnificent chestnut avenue; and mention may be made of the fact that had King William lived, and Wren's plans been fully carried out, that avenue would have been the approach to the grand new Palace front which it was designed to make. As it is we have but such part of the Tudor palace as the rebuilders allowed to remain, and we have but such part of the Orange palace as destiny allowed William to complete.

[Pg 63]

What we have, however, is a splendid whole, consisting, it may be, of incongruous parts, yet one that for charm, for beauty generally and in detail, and for fullness of interest, has but few rivals. Whether we visit it on some quiet day in winter, or in the time when the grounds are at their floral best, and when there are many hundreds of people thronging the galleries and gardens on Sunday afternoons or on popular holidays, it always gives us the same feeling of satisfaction that

[Pg 64]

comes of beautiful surroundings. In the smaller courts and in the shady cloisters may be found in the heat of summer the soothing sense that is one of the secret charms of haunts of ancient peace.

Cardinal Wolsey built himself a lordly pleasure house, unthinking of the fickleness of a monarch's favour; Dutch William sought to make of it a rival to Versailles; and each, though he did not completely realize his design, may be said to have builded better than he knew—in providing for succeeding ages a place of beauty “in which the millions rejoice”.

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