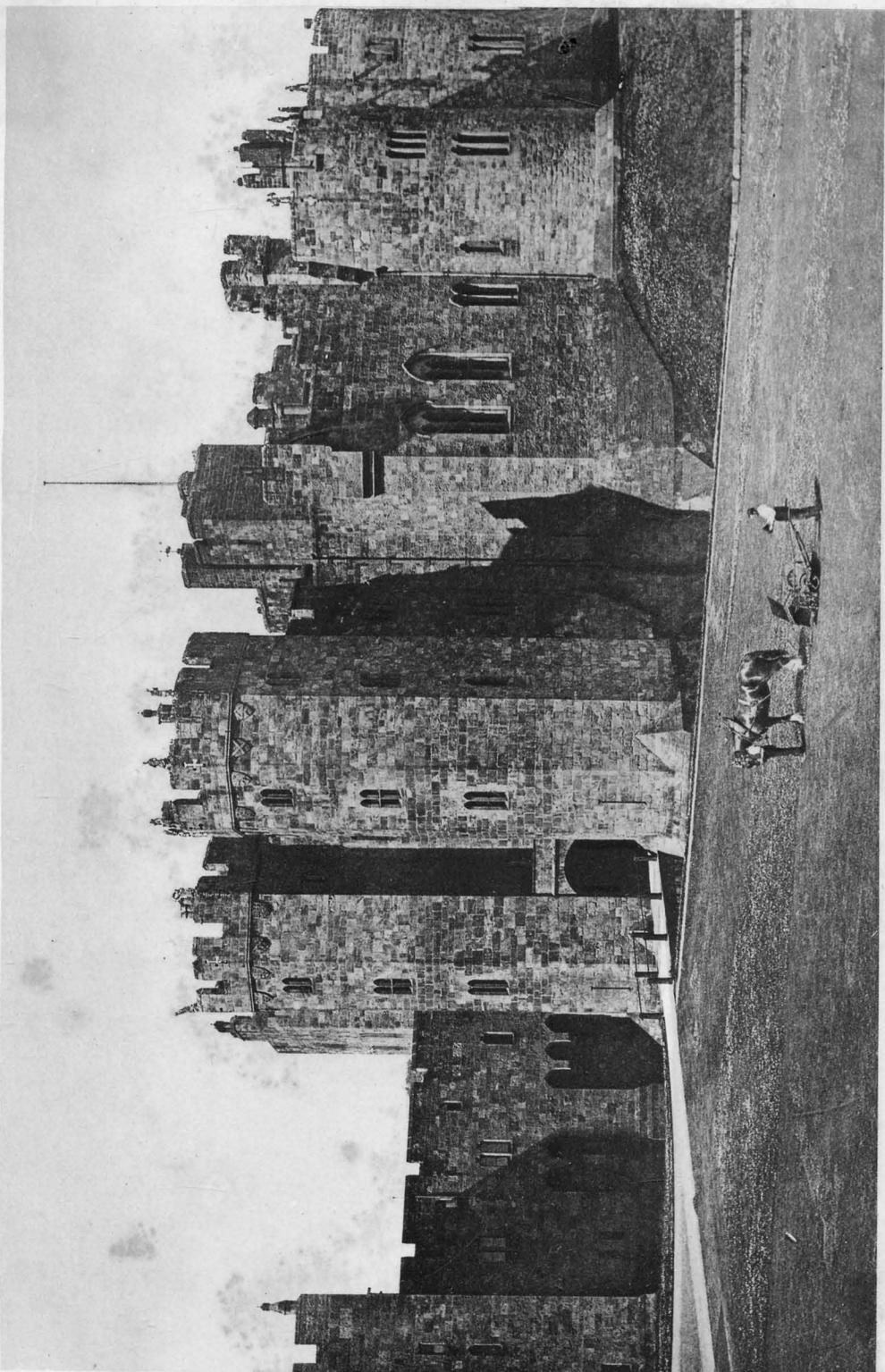


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FAMOUS HOMES OF GREAT BRITAIN AND THEIR STORIES

EDITED BY
A. H. MALAN

BELVOIR CASTLE
BATTLE ABBEY
CHARLECOTE
PENSHURST
BLENHEIM
WARWICK



CAWDOR CASTLE
HOLLAND HOUSE
CHATSWORTH
HARDWICK
ALNWICK
LYME

ILLUSTRATED

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PREFACE

It so materially adds to the pleasure of going over some stately Residence, to know something about its history and contents beforehand (thereby saving one the humiliating after-thought of having overlooked the more interesting details through pure ignorance), that no apology is needed for the publication of the present work.

For if the reader happens to have been inside a good many British Castles and Halls, it will surely have been noticed that the retainers, told off to show the people round, occasionally—from force of circumstances—lamentably fail as efficient cicerones; partly through too facile credence of inaccurate local hand-books, and partly through absorption of contradictory scraps of history, bewilderingly fired at them by random visitors who have assumed quite an air of authority in reference to the objects shown.

The best sources of information on Historic Houses are County Histories, Papers in the various Antiquarian and Field-Club Societies' Transactions, and Private Family Memoirs. But these are not easily accessible; and, supposing that they have been got at, such a mass of printed matter—much of it of the dullest description—has to be waded through, before any intelligent grasp of a family's history can be gained, that few ever make the attempt.

The articles that follow have not been compiled without painstaking consultation of such records. In all cases they are based upon material to a large extent beyond the reach of the

average guide-book scribe; whether they have emanated from the pens of members of the Houses described, or have been supervised and supplemented by an owner or some erudite relative.

Naturally, there will be found a difference in style and point of view; also, more or less of that detachment which may be of service in handling a subject, as against over-familiarity with the theme. *BLENHEIM*, *e. g.*, largely treats of its associations with the great Duke, as befits the gift of a nation to a man it delighted to honour. *CHARLECOTE* evolves its story a good deal from its pictures. *WARWICK CASTLE* shows the descriptive ability of the Chatelaine of that splendid stronghold. *BATTLE ABBEY* inevitably has a Norman and monastic flavour.

But differ as they may in treatment, the writers have been at one in endeavouring to make their contributions bright, though historical, and sufficiently diversified in points touched upon to suit the palate of the general reader. For, though those beautiful Homes invite and merit exclusive attention to their leading features, whether in the way of Architecture, Tapestry, Sculpture, Armour, old Paintings, Carved Wood, or Landscape Gardening, the general reader is apt to fight very shy of a technical treatise, however seductive the subject, or noteworthy the examples.

My thanks are due to those authors who have kindly revised their respective papers since their first appearance in the pages of the *Pall Mall Magazine*; and, whatever faults there may be in the volume, as a whole, it will be found, it is hoped, at least free from the more flagrant defects of pedantry, twaddle, and gush.

A. H. MALAN.

THE SANCTUARY,
ALTARNON, CORNWALL, *June, 1899*