

known as the East Minster. Westminster Abbey is said to date from the 7th century, for Sebert, King of Essex, is credited with having founded it in 635. Tradition carries the matter further and holds that the Abbey was founded on the site of a Pagan Temple. Let those statements be taken as fact or not, according to the views of the historian, we can with certainty trace the history of the Abbey back to 1065, when it was rebuilt by the Confessor.

Doubtless the importance of the City of Westminster was, in the past, due to the great Abbey and to the King's Palace situated near it. Up to the days of Elizabeth the Abbot of Westminster had supreme power. Yet up to the reign of James I, Westminster consisted chiefly of mud huts and a few thatched houses, and near it Thorney Isle, on which Canute is believed to have built a Palace. It is generally thought that the origin of Westminster, as a residential city, was due to the Scots who came up to London with James I, so that in a sense we may say that

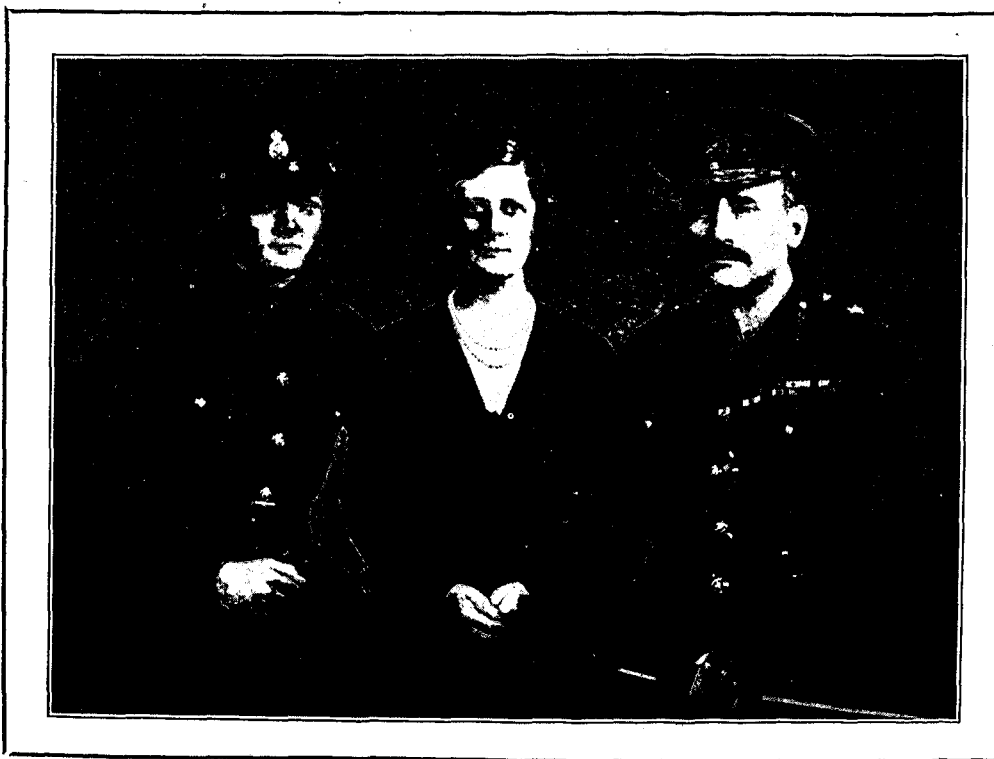
William Rufus in 1087, which up to 1883 was the principal headquarters of the Courts of Justice. Reference was made to the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey, which was used as the House of Commons up to the ascension of Edward VI. Later the Commons met in the Chapel of St. Stephen. We see an interesting survival of these days in the custom of Members bowing to the Speaker's Chair. In the old Chapel of St. Stephen the Members bowed to the altar, where stood the Sacred Host, and not to the Speaker. The Houses of Parliament were destroyed by fire in 1834. It took eighteen years to rebuild them, and in 1852 they were again occupied. The Speaker's Chair stood where the altar once did, and it is to the memory of that old-time altar that Members of Parliament do obeisance. The rebuilding does not reflect credit on our ancestors. Their architect, Sir Charles Barry, visualised a large and spacious chamber, and it is due to the opposition to his scheme that our House of Commons which numbers 615 Members has seating accommodation for 400 only.

After references to St. Margaret's, Major Rigg gave us some very interesting glimpses of the history of the Churches of St. Martin's in the Fields, and St. James's. The former owes its site to the fact that Henry VIII greatly objected to funerals passing along Whitehall where his palace was situated. St. Anne's, Soho, and St. George's, Hanover Square, also came under the survey of the lecturer, and then several famous old charitable foundations, among them the Lady Dacre Alms Houses, the Emily Hill Alms Houses, the City of Westminster Schools and others. Next was described St. James's Palace, built over an old hospital for women lepers, the Palace where Mary I died, with the word "Calais" on her lips, in 1558, and where Charles II was born in 1630. At the Court of St. James's many ambassadors have received their titles and been instructed in their duties; here new sovereigns are proclaimed; and, indeed, rich is the history of St. James's in all that has taken place there of great Court gatherings, investitures and the like.

Major Rigg referred to the district round the Palace as the Home of the London Clubs. The oldest club in town was situated there, *i.e.*, White's Club. The origin of these Clubs is curious—they were mostly transformed taverns which retained the names of their previous owners. When George III became king people had little education, few could write, and even if they could read this availed them little in the matter of obtaining political information, for it was illegal to publish Parliamentary debates. Therefore these Clubs and Taverns were the chief centres of information, and news was disseminated from them. Major Rigg gave us interesting information regarding the dimensions of the City of Westminster and of many other places of interest within its borders, but, unfortunately, space denies us the privilege of recapitulating much interesting information.

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we owe the City of Westminster to our Northern neighbours. Elizabeth in 1585 granted to it a Court of Burgesses of the City and Liberty of Westminster, and this continued to exist until 1901. The Local Government Act, 1899, had formed twenty-nine metropolitan municipalities in the County of London. The Old Court of Burgesses continued from 1585 to 1901, and the Dean of Westminster acted as its Chairman; he still appoints the principal honorary officials of the City of Westminster, *viz.*, the High Steward and the High Bailiff.

Major Rigg next gave interesting details of the history of Westminster School, one of the finest public schools in the country. It has great privileges and is recognised as a wonderful hereditary school—on its board appear the names of five or six generations of pupils in many cases, and also on that board are many names distinguished in history and literature.

Next Major Rigg described Westminster Hall, built by

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