

was made by Colonel Lansford and other Royalist officers for the purpose, as surmised, of seizing the "magazine of arms" then deposited in the town, and afterwards proceeding to Portsmouth to secure that fortress for the king. "Whatever was the actual design," observes Brayley, "it was defeated by the promptness of the Commons, who caused Lansford to be arrested, and accused the Lord Digby of high treason, it having been given in evidence at the bar of the House that he came to Kingston 'in a coach and six horses from Hampton Court,' to which place his Majesty had retired from his palace of Whitehall a day or two previously to the meeting, and conferred with them a long time, and then returned again thither."

George Withers' libel on Sir Richard Onslow, entitled *Justiciarius Justificatus*, was ordered by the House of Commons, in August, 1646, to be publicly burnt in the market-place here on the market-day, as well as at Guildford.

In 1882 a drinking-fountain was set up in the market-place to the memory of Mr. Henry Shrubsole, who had been thrice in succession elected Mayor of Kingston, and who died while holding that official position.

Kingston is included in the Home Circuit, and both the Lent assizes and the Michaelmas sessions were formerly held in the Town Hall, but the inconveniences experienced were so great that it was deemed necessary to erect a new court-house. This was accordingly carried out, the new building being erected at a cost of about £10,000. This court-house stands at the lower end of the market-place, on the Surbiton side. The winter assizes are always held here. The two courts in which the Crown and Nisi Prius cases are tried are spacious and well lighted, and conveniently fitted up. In the Assize Court at Kingston was tried George Barnewell, the apprentice, for the murder of his uncle at Camberwell.*

Adjoining the law courts is a large mansion belonging to the Corporation, called Clattern House, in which the judges reside on their circuit in this town.

At one time Kingston must have been rich in old mansions. In the market-place there is a shop, kept by Mr. Chilcott, a tailor and draper, which looks as if it had been built since her Majesty's accession. Its walls and beams, however, are certainly as old as the reign of Elizabeth, though the panelling of the former is concealed by paper. The ground-floor rooms, now converted into a shop, are very low, and such is the case with

the drawing-room, which contains a finely-carved oak chimney-piece. The glory of the house, however, is its staircase, a really noble specimen of late Elizabethan or early Jacobean work. It is broad and massive, and much resembles that in the former palace of the Howards at the Charterhouse,* though far richer in its details. The banisters are of the finest and most solid black oak, the handrails being carved with grotesque figures of beasts, birds, &c., and of children riding outside Bacchanalian casks or tuns. From this, and from the frequent recurrence of the initials E. B., I. B., C. B., &c., it is conjectured that the above figure is a "rebus," and that the house belonged to a family named "Boy-tun," or "Boy-ton." A part of the banisters represents an old castellated mansion, and may be intended as a representation of the original front.

In the centre of the town there still remain a few other quaint old houses with heavy beams of timber, massive timber mantelpieces, and richly-carved staircases; but their number is diminishing gradually. Many of them have been re-fronted, so that, like ladies of a certain age, they disguise their antiquity. Many of the courts in the old part of the town still retain the quaint look which they wore, doubtless, in the days of the Stuarts.

The House of Correction was closed in 1852, on the completion of the county prison at Wandsworth. Additional buildings were subsequently erected for the accommodation of the Third Royal Surrey Militia. The drill hall, a spacious building, capable of accommodating between 2,000 and 3,000 persons, is occasionally used for public entertainments. It is the head-quarters of the 12th Surrey (Kingston) Rifle Volunteers. The interior is suitably decorated with banners, armorial shields, &c. Kingston is now a military dépôt, and the head-quarters of the 31st Regimental District (East Surrey Regiment!). The barracks are situate adjoining the King's Road, between Richmond Park and the Richmond Roads.

Kingston has its public free library and its literary institution. The latter is a handsome building, situated in Thames Street, and forms a conspicuous object in the approach to the town from the bridge. It is built of bricks of different colours, and consists of two storeys, surmounted by a stone coping, which partially conceals the roof. The institution was first established in 1839, and many useful lectures on various branches of art, science, and literature, have been delivered here.

Among the most important institutions of Kings-

* See "Old and New London," Vol. VI., p. 286.

* See "Old and New London," Vol. II., p. 389.