

**GUIDE TO RAGLAN CASTLE,
INCLUDING MANY
INTERESTING PARTICULARS
CONNECTED WITH ITS HISTORY**

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Guide to Raglan castle, including many interesting particulars connected with its history by R. Waugh

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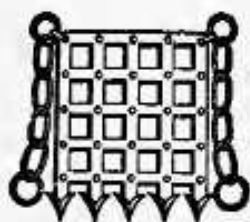
R. WAUGH

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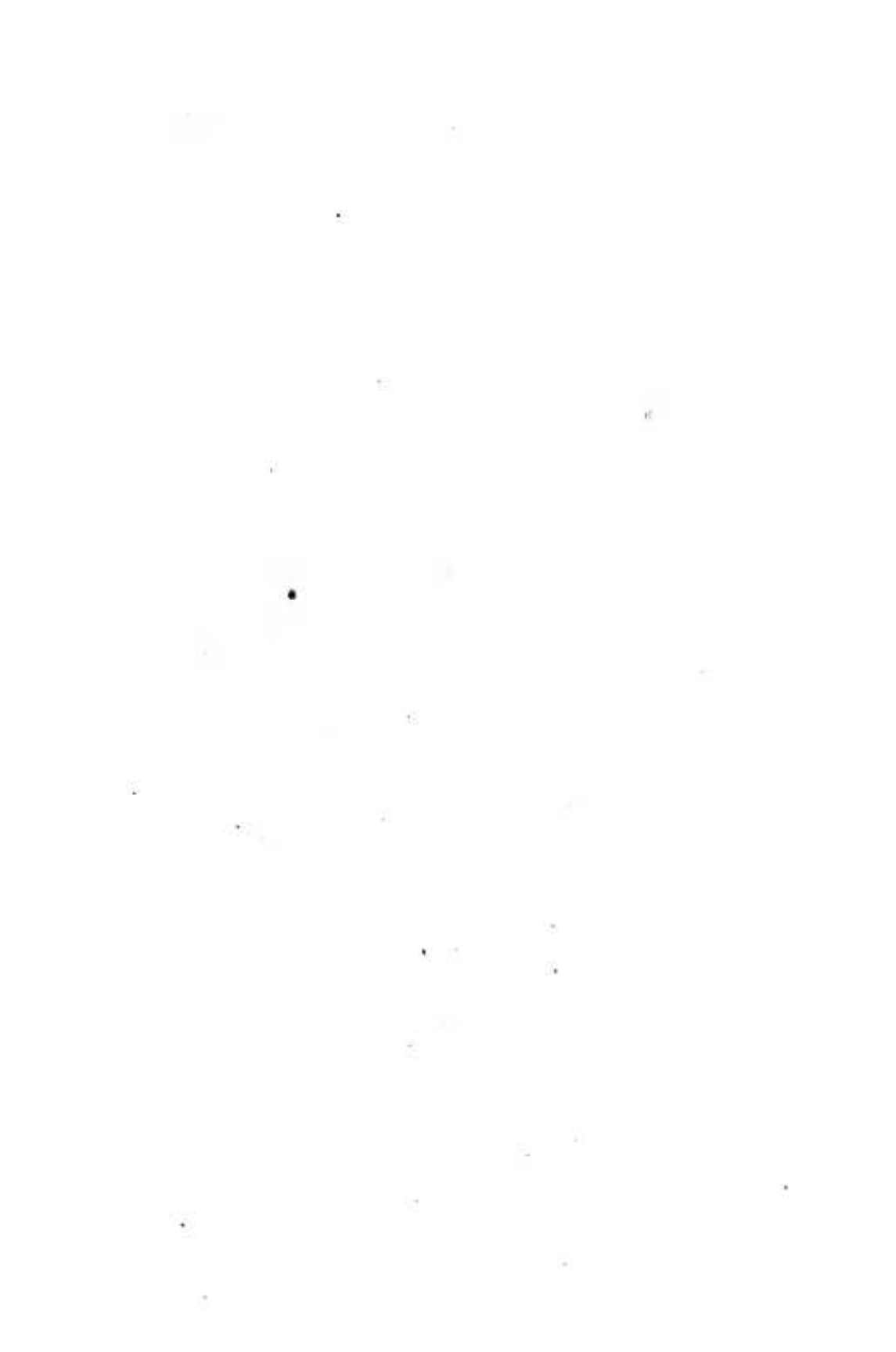
GUIDE
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RAGLAN CASTLE,

*Including many interesting particulars connected
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Dedicated, by permission, to Her Grace the Duchess of Beaufort.



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RAGLAN CASTLE.

As some proud column, though alone,
RAGLAND* hath propp'd a tottering throne:
Now is the stately column broke,
The beacon-light is quenched in smoke:
The trumpet's silver sound is still—
The warder silent on the hill!

AMONGST the multiplied strongholds which in bygone days crowded the classic land of Gwent,† RAGLAN CASTLE stood boldly, pre-eminent for beauty and strength, at once comprehending within its extensive confines a regal palace and a mighty fortress.

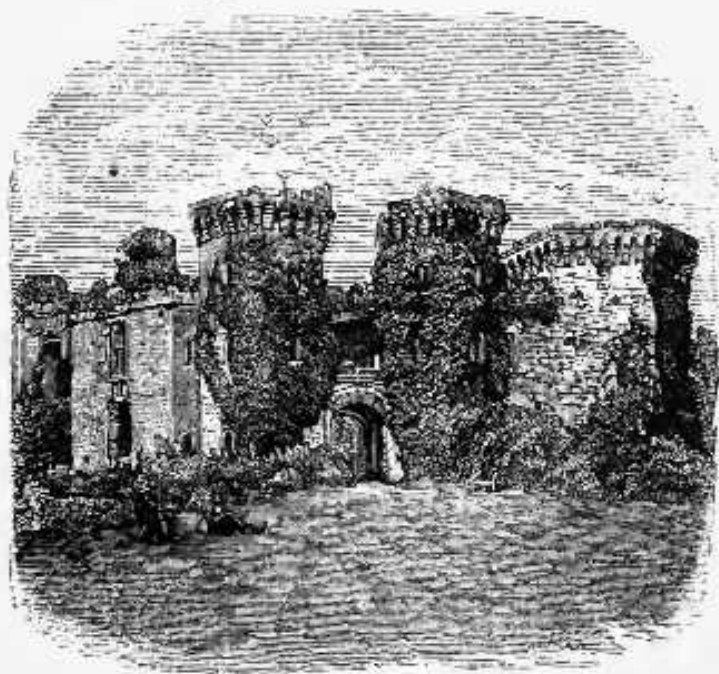
In the midst of a fertile country, eight miles from Monmouth, on the Abergavenny road, this princely ruin stands, crowning a gentle eminence with a diadem of towers. For architectural beauty, rich draperied ivy, and brilliant greenness of sward by which it is surrounded, no castle in existence can excel it, and to tourists visiting this part of the country it forms a principal object of attraction.

The celebrity of Raglan Castle as a stronghold and focus of loyalty during the eventful reign of Charles I., with the

* *Ragland* is derived from *Rhaglaw*, the Welsh word commonly used for governor. Thus—the governor's seat or castle, the governor's church, &c. The final *d* is now generally omitted.

† When this county submitted to the Roman Government, it was called *Gwent*, or the Kingdom of Gwent.

gallant resistance it offered to the Parliamentary forces—it being the first castle that was fortified, and the last that held out for that ill-fated monarch—render it, in a national point of view, an object of much interest. The injury it sustained when besieged by General Fairfax, and its subsequent dismantlement by order of Cromwell, have contributed to make it, in its present enchanting garb, an object alike of admiration and regard.



GRAND ENTRANCE.

The approach is made on the border of an ancient grove of oaks and elms, whose knotty limbs and umbrageous foliage altogether obscure the ruin, until at length, upon arriving at the gate of the lodge, and passing through upon the grassy terrace within—once the EASTERN COURT—a magnificent and imposing spectacle bursts upon the eye,

realizing the image of some brilliant scene in fairy-land—some enchanter's castle in an eastern romance.

Before us rise three PENTAGONAL TOWERS, surmounted by battlements, and bearing on their faces the deeply-indented scars of war. Of these the right exterior gently recedes from the foreground, leaving the innermost to present their martial aspect in the front. These are the most perfect parts of the ruin, and seem to have escaped the hands of the spoiler only to become victims at the altar of Time. Already is the sacrifice profusely decked with flowers; lichens and moss, ferns and wallflowers, as if in mockery, bloom in each decaying crevice; whilst, from their devoted heads, long pendant garlands of ivy gracefully fall.

To the left, insulated by a deep moat, stand the gigantic remains of the ancient hexagonal TOWER OF GWENT, once the frowning citadel, but now an utter ruin. After the surrender of the fortress to the Parliamentary forces, in defiance of the stipulation, those truce-breakers sapped the foundation of this truly magnificent part of the castle, and, springing a mine, blew up the noblest tower in Gwent. Let its ruins be for ever the monument of their shame!

We now proceed through the grand Gothic PORTAL, between the foremost pentagonal towers, into the second court of the castle; and, in passing, remark the light and elegant character of its shafts and arches, and the grooves down which, in times of yore, the massive portcullises were wont to fall in the face of the besieging foe.

THE SECOND, OR PAVED COURT, which once resounded with a martial clangour to the iron tread of men-at-arms, is now muffled by a gentle carpet of verdant sod; while one sapling of ash has grown into a lofty and luxuriant tree, to contrast its light and wavy foliage with the dark-tinted parasite that clothes the walls around.

All the buildings to the right of the court (particularly that which was once the CLOSET TOWER) suffered greatly

during the last memorable siege; and here the Parliamentary forces effected a *breach*, which contributed no doubt to hasten the surrender of the castle.

By proceeding to the extremity of the court on the right, to a seat beneath the shade of a widely-spreading ash, an effective view is gained of the southern side, which is eminently picturesque. Its boundary is there hung with the



ROOM IN GATEWAY TOWER.

richest tapestry—a mantling vestment of evergreen, through which appears, in grand proportions, the majestic window of the hall of state.

At the extremity of the court, and opposite to the portal, is an archway leading to the KITCHEN, which occupies the area of a pentagonal tower of narrow compass, but of great solidity and strength. In an adjoining office is an extensive fire-place, the arch of which is thirteen feet in the span, and

is formed by two massive stones. Beneath the kitchen is a room, in perfect preservation, denominated the *Wet Larder*, which may be easily gained by a subterranean passage.

Returning to the court, the next object of interest is the **BARONIAL HALL**. This stately apartment occupies the interval between the two inner courts. The chief indications of its bygone grandeur are found in its extensive propor-



STONE EFFIGIES IN CHAPEL.

tions, in the window to which allusion has already been made, and in the fireplace, measuring ten feet wide and eight feet high. The stone-sculptured arms of the marquisite of Worcester, upon the eastern wall, are nearly obliterated: these were probably defaced by the rebel soldiery to whom the castle was surrendered. This hall once possessed a beautiful geometrical roof, built with Irish oak, with a cupola in the centre, glazed with painted glass.