

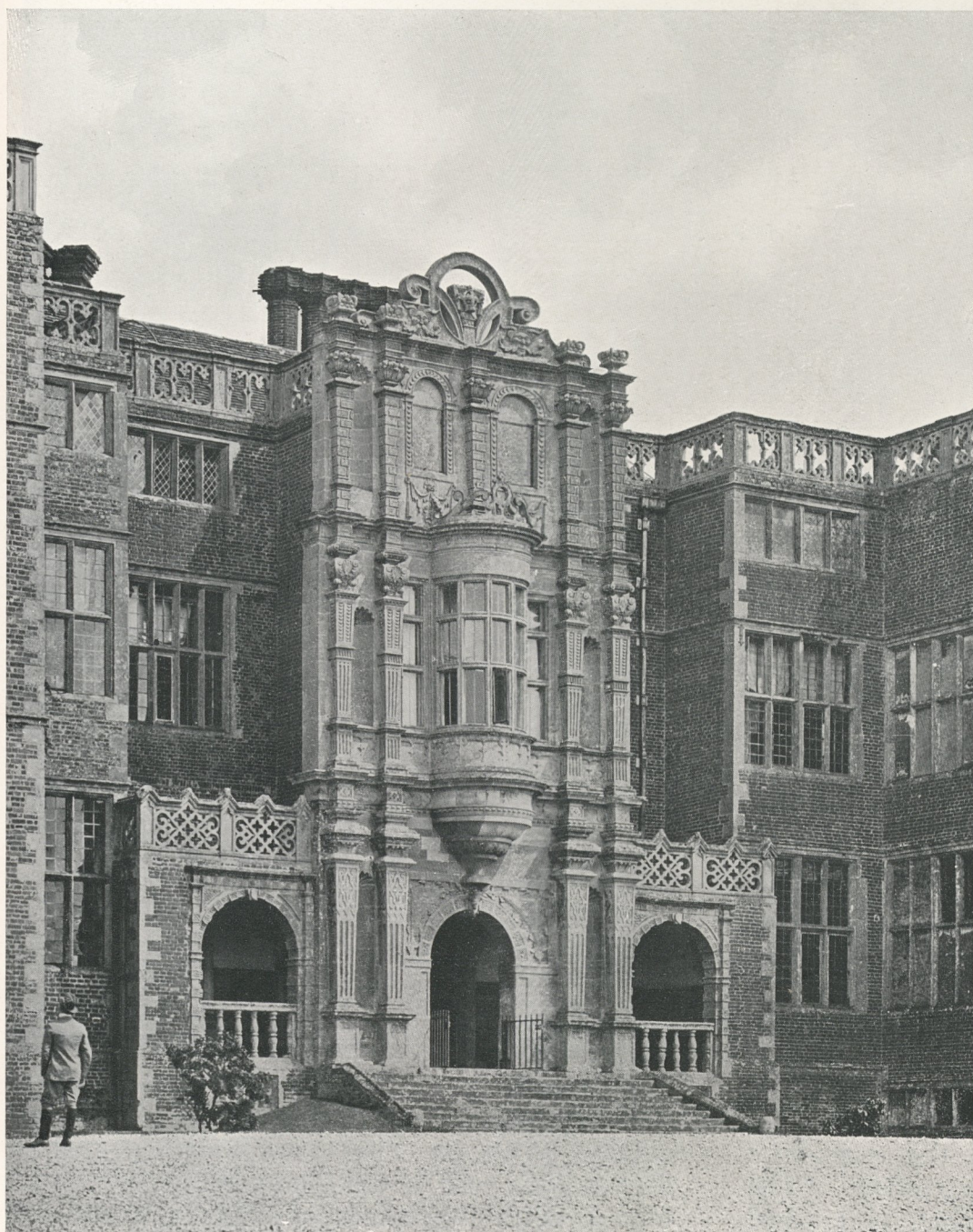
BRAMSHILL PARK, HAMPSHIRE.

BRAMSHILL, one of the most famous houses in Hampshire, a county notably rich in mansions of the old times, stands in the parish of Eversley, in the extreme north of the shire. The place belonged in the time of our earliest knowledge to one Hugh de Port, from whose descendants, the St. Johns of Basing, it passed to the Foxleys, and Sir John of that family founded and built a private chapel at his house there early in the fourteenth century. His son, Thomas Foxley, received a licence in 1347 to enclose 2,500 acres as a park, and, after more than five centuries, that park still exists,

though it is now of much greater extent. Some remains of the ancient house are built up in the existing structure, and portions of the gate-tower may be seen. The estate went through many hands, and was at one time possessed by the Marquess of Winchester, who, it is interesting to note, was descended from Hugh de Port, its possessor at the time of the Norman survey. In March, 1605, Sir Stephen Thornhurst sold the manor and estate to Edward Lord Zouch of Harringworth, the builder of the existing house. Zouch was a man well known in his time, who held many important offices, and

among others was Ambassador to Scotland. For our purpose it is more interesting to know that he was a lover of horticulture and architecture, and displayed his care for both at Bramshill. His architect there was the celebrated John Thorpe, who also built for a member of the Cope family—Sir Walter Cope—Holland House immediately afterwards.

The alteration of the old house was begun probably not long after Lord Zouch came into possession, and was completed externally in 1612, but much of the internal work may be a little later. Lord Zouch died in 1625, and his estate was sold for £12,000 to Randal McDonell, second Earl of Antrim, and, after passing through the hands of Sir Robert Henley, was sold again, in 1699, to Sir John Cope, knight, eldest son of the fifth baronet, whose elder brother, Sir Anthony Cope, of Hanwell Castle in Oxfordshire, left the bulk of the ancient estates of the Cope family, with the seats of Hanwell, Drayton, Tangley, Bruerne, Ranton Abbey, Orton-Longueville, and



THE ENTRANCE LOGGIA.

others to his cousin, Sir Jonathan Cope, in consequence of which Bramshill was bought by Sir John Cope (afterwards the sixth baronet), and has been the principal seat of the Cope family ever since, they cherishing it as such a place deserves. The house has undergone some changes, but a judicious restoration has for some time been going forward gradually, and various disfigurements have been removed. The material of the structure is brick, with quoins, mullions, and dressings of Headington stone, which has stood very well in the dry atmosphere of the place,

Doric and Corinthian style freely treated. There are ornamental niches, and a most graceful oriel stands out upon a corbel, while the top of the structure is crowned with a curious ornament, considered to represent, and probably does so, the Prince of Wales's feathers and coronet, thus confirming, what has always been handed down as a fact, that the house was altered for Henry Prince of Wales, son of James I., as does the beautiful ceiling in one of the rooms, now the chapel, which bears the Royal arms, the rose, fleur de lys, and dragon of Wales, with the Royal coronet and Order of the



THE CHAPEL DRAWING-ROOM.

though signs of decay are not wanting in some parts. The north-west front presents a magnificent range of bold and impressive gables, with mullioned windows and bays. The garden or terrace front is distinguished by a perforated parapet and fine windows, and more particularly by the double arches under the projecting bays at the ends, which open upon the front of the house, where runs the bowling-green terrace.

The entrance front is on the south-west side, and is very fine and characteristic. The cloister, or loggia, of three arches, is reached by steps, and in the centre rises a projecting porch chamber, or bay, with double pilasters in

Garth, the Tudor rose, the fleur de lys of France, and the dragon of Wales being the arms of the Copes, the present owners, given, in place of their ancient arms, to their ancestor, Sir William Cope, and his lawful descendants, by Henry VII., to whom he was cofferer. There are grate-backs, very handsome ones, in the State Rooms and Great Hall, with the Royal arms and supporters, one with "J.R., 1604," and another with the Prince of Wales's plumes in high relief; and in the Great Hall is a Prince's helmet with the Prince of Wales's plume and the Star of the Garter enamelled on it.

Passing through the wide doorway, we



THE LONG GALLERY.

reach the hall, which is unlike most halls of the period in being only of one storey. The frieze and cornice are original, as is a room above, which has a stone chimney-piece and other stonework, showing that at no period could the hall itself have been more lofty. There is

of Spencer, Mohun, Chaworth, and Mordaunt, these representing the four principal heiresses who have intermarried with the Copes. Some panelling has been painted white, some in neutral colours, and some in blue, and in certain cases there are stencilled ornaments in the panels.



THE STATE DRAWING-ROOM.

a screen of elegant design, with unusual arches, and much excellent woodwork, adorned with ninety-two various shields, while in the spandrels of the arches are the four Cardinal Virtues in costumes of the early seventeenth century. The carved Renaissance chimney-piece has the arms

Sir Anthony Cope is by degrees, and very judiciously, bringing back the house to its original state. Like his father, who wrote an account of the place, he reveres it, and is preserving it from decay, although the evidences of its age are plainly upon it. From the dais

at the upper end of this large apartment, double doors give access to the terrace hall or foot of the great stairway, crossing which the dining-room is entered, a pleasant apartment hung with forest scenes in tapestry from the Mortlake factory. From the dining-room the red drawing-room and billiard-room are reached, both modernised nearly a century ago, and beyond is the garden-room, which is wainscoted, and has a richly carved chimney-piece brought from another house. The rooms just described look out upon the garden terrace, and a door from the garden-room leads to the eastern arches, giving access to it. Hereabout are square-headed Perpendicular doorways, and other old evidences, for at this end of the structure was the gate-house of the Foxleys.

We may now return to the great stairs, and ascend to the State drawing-room, which is of fine proportions, being nearly a double cube. The chimney-piece is remarkable in having pillars, Doric and Ionic, in pure classic style, while the cresting is quite of the late Renaissance. The material used is variegated and white marble, and with these the design over the fireplace is formed. The panelling of the ceiling is rich, elaborate, and of unusual design, but the chief interest of the apartment lies in its magnificent tapestries, which were worked from cartoons by Rubens and executed at Brussels under his supervision. It appears that the great painter was anxious to obtain a collection of marbles from Sir Dudley Carleton, then Ambassador at the Hague, and to give some of his own paintings and a set of tapestries in return. He wrote to the Ambassador in May, 1618, in relation to the matter: "In respect of the tapestries, I will send your Excellency the whole measurement of my cartoons of the History of Decius Mus, the Roman consul who devoted himself to the success of the Roman people; but I shall write to Brussels to have them correct, having given everything to the master of the works." It would appear that Sir Dudley Carleton preferred a set of tapestries dealing with episodes in the life of Scipio, and

that the tapestries of Decius, in a manner not known, somehow found their way to Bramshill. They represent Decius consulting the augurs and taking leave of the Senate before engaging in the war against the Samnites, as also his death and obsequies.

From the State drawing-room the library is entered, having a collection of about 5,000 early and other printed books. A doorway then brings us to the long gallery, which is one of the most spacious in England, being 130ft. long and 20ft. 6in. broad. It has a fine frieze and ceiling, but is panelled with oak and deal painted to look like pollard oak, which is not original. The chimney-piece, however, like the frieze and ceiling, belongs to the old structure, and is a good example of Renaissance carving. The character of the spacious chamber will be seen in one of our pictures, and its fine furniture will be observed.

From the long gallery we enter a room known as the "Flower de Luce," from the pattern of golden fleurs de lys in dark green ovals in the centre of each panel. A house like Bramshill could scarcely be without its ghosts, and it is in the Flower de Luce room that the "White Lady" haunts the night, when the moonbeams fall through the panes and the wind sighs in the trees.

The chapel drawing-room is one of the most attractive chambers in the whole house, owing to its shape, proportions, and general aspect, for it has two deep bays on the south-west front, and a shallower one overlooking the terrace. Its mullioned windows, geometrical ceiling, old wainscot, family pictures, and beautiful furniture complete the pleasing *ensemble*. A stone doorway leads to the chapel, which rises into the roof, and has a ceiling of most beautiful design. Much of the work here is comparatively modern, and has all been judiciously executed. It was the late baronet who rescued the place from decay, and his son is carrying on the work. Enough has been said to show that Bramshill is a very fine example of an old English house characteristically adorned and well cared for.

