

HADDON HALL, DERBYSHIRE.

THE name and fame of Haddon Hall have lifted that historic house to such a height of dignity and consequence among the glorious mansions of ancient England, that it stands as the chief exemplar, and the speaking voice, as it were, of the dwelling-places of our long dead sires. Who, we may ask, can visit Haddon Hall and not be filled with the moving story and the fond romance of humanity? What memories of old-time glories, ambitions, and occupations, of passions long stilled, and yet of emotions that are ours, are evoked as we walk in the golden shade of the sycamores and limes, or linger on the terrace under the low-hanging boughs of the yews, or traverse that wondrous range of buildings, and sojourn in those ancient chambers, out of whose windows looked lovingly

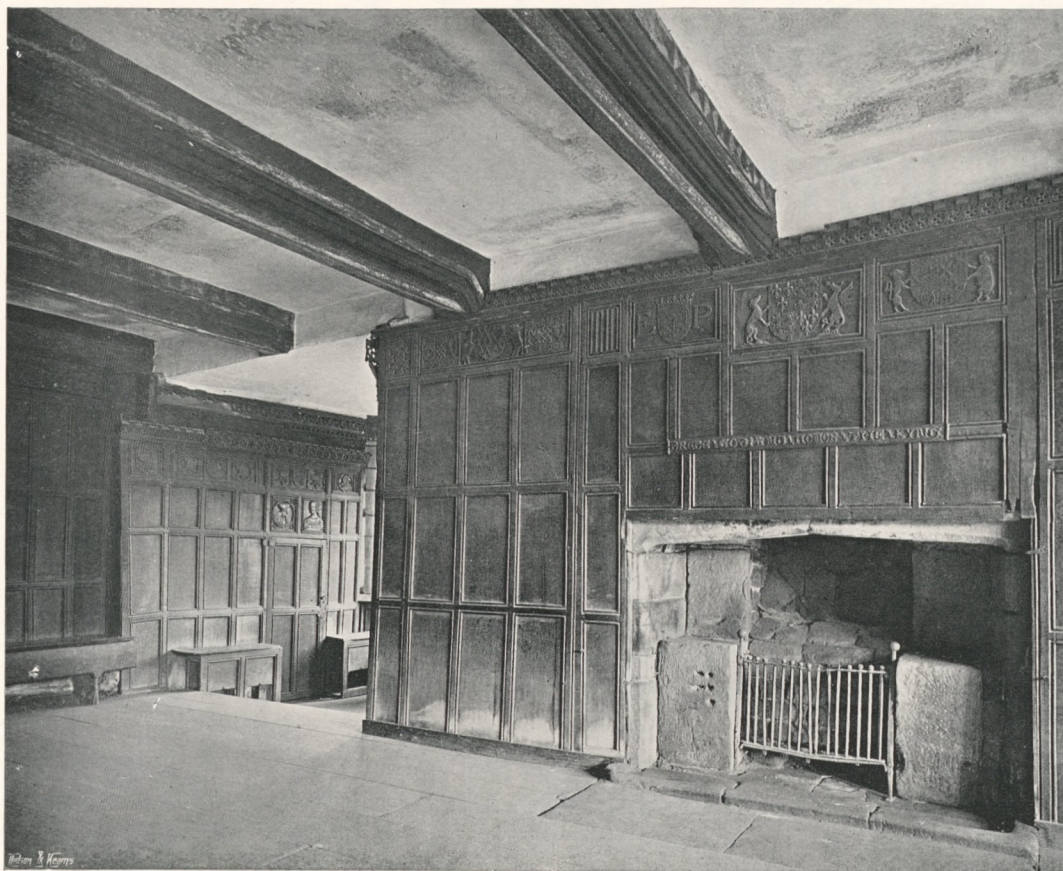
into their garden the men and women of long ago! There may be places more magnificent, but the transcendental delight of the home of the Vernons lies in its happy union of history and poetry with rare beauty of architecture, richness of internal adornment, and the external charms of an old garden, and a beautiful neighbouring land. Where else can we receive such impressions of ancient greatness touched with the witchery of bygone romance?

Haddon Hall owes much of its charm and picturesqueness to the slope by the beautiful Derbyshire Wye, upon which it stands. It is unusual, in that ranges of buildings enclose two complete courtyards, each as quaint and delightful as the other.

The visitor passes into the lower courtyard



THE BANQUETING HALL.



THE DINING-ROOM.

by the gate-tower at its north-western angle, and, passing the porter's lodge, is delighted with the beautiful structures which form the enclosure.

On the lower or western side is the "Chaplain's Room," and, opposite to the entrance, the Domestic Chapel, of which the south aisle is very ancient, and probably belongs to a time before the Vernons came to Haddon. The upper part of this lower courtyard is formed chiefly of the splendid windows of the Great Hall, of which the low, broad chimney forms a very striking object; and very picturesque also is the projecting porch, through which we gain access to the lobby separating the Hall on the right from the kitchen and offices on the left.

The Hall is a very impressive apartment, panelled in oak, and having a plain open timber roof.

The Minstrels' Gallery is over this entrance passage, and it extends on the side opposite to the windows, giving access to the upper apartments,



THE DRAWING-ROOM.



HADDON HALL.

THE LONG GALLERY.

while the dais is at the other end, and still has the great oak table at which the lord and his family dined in ancient days, and at which the late Duke of Rutland entertained the King and Queen, when Prince and Princess of Wales, at luncheon a few years ago. Behind the Hall are the private Dining Room, and the beautiful Drawing Room above, from whose windows there are delightful views down the course of the Wye. Both are wainscoted with beautiful oak—the Dining Room with carved enrichments, the initials of the builder and his wife, the Royal arms, the device of Edward, Prince of Wales, and the motto

extends along the southern side, and has glorious bays which command superb views of the garden and landscape. There is extreme quaintness, beauty, and attractiveness in the architecture externally. The Long Gallery is entered by remarkable segmental steps of solid oak, and is richly panelled and characteristically adorned, deriving much character from its bold bays and enriched ceiling. At the further end is a doorway leading into the buildings which form the uppermost or eastern side of the mansion, where is the Anteroom, with “Dorothy Vernon’s Steps,” which lead down to the lovely terrace. The



THE GREAT BAY IN THE LONG GALLERY.

“Drede God and Honor the Kyng,” and the Drawing Room with much elaborate plaster-work. The kitchen, on the other side of the lobby, is approached by a sloping passage, and has a vast fireplace and ancient culinary appliances, while the buttery, wine-cellar, and sundry offices are closely adjacent.

This range of buildings, including the Hall and kitchen, forms the lower or western side of the second or upper courtyard, which, like the other, is surrounded by structures of exceeding quaintness, wherein are several tapestried and panelled rooms. The magnificent Long Gallery or ballroom, a chief splendour of the place,

finest view of the whole range of buildings is gained from the lofty Eagle, or Peveril, Tower, on the higher level of the eastern side, which commands also a great prospect of the valley of the Wye.

Towards the end of the twelfth century Haddon passed to the Vernons by the marriage of Richard de Vernon with Avicia, a daughter of William de Avenell, who had possessed it under the King.

It was this first Vernon of Haddon who surrounded his mansion with a curtain wall for protection against the unruly, and his authority to build it is still in the possession of the Duke



THE CHAPEL ENTRANCE.

of Rutland at Belvoir. Probably the older parts of the Chapel belong to his time. The later Vernons held the place through a female descent, for Richard's only daughter married a certain Gilbert le Franceys, whose descendants came to be known by the greater name of Vernon. They married many heiresses, and no doubt to their growing wealth was due much of the beauty of Haddon. Richard de Vernon, a man of might in his time, who died in 1377, added the porch to the Great Hall. Two Sir Richards followed in succession, the last of whom was the builder of the chancel of the Chapel. His successor, Sir William Vernon, also married an heiress, and gained great possessions in Shropshire; but, nevertheless, like his fathers, he went on building at Haddon, particularly in improving the Chapel. His son, Henry Vernon, was a soldier in whom the King-maker had trust. "Henry, I pray you fail not now, as ever I may do for you," wrote Warwick to him in March, 1471, and he added, "Yonder man Edward" was fast making his way south, and Henry Vernon was to march to Coventry "in all haste possible, as my very singular trust is in you, and as I may do things to your weal or worship hereafter." But Henry Vernon, with the discretion which is the better part of valour, appears to have stayed at home, instead of putting all to the test at Barnet. His diplomacy was so successful that he was in the confidence of both parties. Richard III. also put trust in him, and summoned him with troops he had promised before the battle of Bosworth, but Vernon must have acted with singular discretion, for he was presently in high favour with Henry VII., who made him a Knight of the Bath and Comptroller of Prince Arthur's household. The knight carried on the work at Haddon, and completed the buildings overlooking the Wye, besides embellishing the Drawing Room.

Then came the famous Sir George Vernon, "King of the Peak," his grandson or great-grandson, who was a man of much wealth, and whose vast hospitality became proverbial, and made him one of the most popular men of his time. He raised the north-western tower, completed the Dining Room, and did a great deal of other work at Haddon.

Dorothy Vernon, whose romance has contributed no little to the fame of the house, was his daughter and ultimately his sole heiress. We are

left to imagination in regard to many of the circumstances of her love match with John Manners, the second son of Sir Thomas Manners, first Earl of Rutland, of which tradition asserts that it was under her father's ban. The story goes that the ardent lover haunted the neighbouring woods disguised as a forester or hunter, and that the famous elopement took place on an occasion of some festivity at the Hall. Manners had horses near, and Dorothy stole down the steps and along the terrace to where he was waiting. The sound of their horses' hoofs was drowned in the noise of revelry, and after galloping all night they reached Aylstone in Leicestershire, where they were married on the morrow. Of these things does the visitor think when he lingers on Dorothy Vernon's Terrace, and the memory of her romance will long cling to the ancient chambers of Haddon.

John Manners was a man of wealth and consideration, rich in his many friends, and great in the affairs and the Court of the time. He it was who built the splendid Long Gallery at Haddon, and since his death in 1611 no important changes have been made in the place. The length of the splendid chamber is 109ft., its width 18ft., and its height 15ft. The whole of the flooring, as well as the solid steps by which it is entered, are said to have been cut from a single oak which grew in the park. The wainscot is singularly rich, the arched panels being separated by fluted pilasters, and above are the boar's head of Vernon and the peacock of Manners, with roses and thistles alternated. In the windows the shields of Rutland and Shrewsbury are emblazoned, with the Royal arms of England, and the whole of the details are very beautiful.

John Manners was followed at Haddon by his son, Sir George Manners, whose son John succeeded as eighth Earl of Rutland, and lived alternately at Belvoir and Haddon. He appears to have exercised prodigious hospitality at Haddon, where there was a huge consumption of bees and sheep at the Christmas of 1663. The ninth Earl was created Marquis of Granby and Duke of Rutland. John, the third Duke, occasionally lived at Haddon, but during his time the family finally ceased to reside in this ancient place, which was dismantled as a residence about the year 1740. Happily, it is still preserved in a state of perfection, and with a religious care which the admirable place well deserves.