

GRIMSTHORPE, LINCOLNSHIRE.

THE most ancient part of the present structure of the Earl of Ancaster's Lincolnshire seat is the tower at the south-eastern angle, which is said to have been built as a watch-tower in the reign of King John, to keep guard over the fen country, though upon that point no certainty can be felt. About half a mile away stood the Cistercian Abbey of Vaudey, a corruption of Vallis Dei, founded by William Earl of Albemarle, and the present fish-ponds and red deer-park are the survival of those monastic times. On the dissolution of the monasteries, Henry VIII. bestowed the lands of Vaudey Abbey upon William, ninth Lord Willoughby de Eresby, who already held extensive possessions about Spilsby, Willoughby, and Alford in Lincolnshire. This Lord Willoughby

had married Mary de Salines, a maid of honour to Queen Katherine of Aragon, and Katherine Willoughby, the sole issue of this marriage, was made the ward of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who subsequently married her as his fourth wife, on the death of his third wife, Mary Tudor, who was sister to Henry VIII. and widow of Louis XII. of France. Fuller describes Grimsthorpe as a long range of buildings raised hastily by the Duke of Suffolk in order to entertain his brother-in-law, Henry VIII. and Queen Catherine Howard, who slept there on August 6th and 7th, 1541, on their journey to York to meet the King's nephew, James V. of Scotland. Leland says, in reference to this enlargement: "The place of Grimsthorpe was no great thing afore the new building of the second court; yet was all the old



THE ENTRANCE HALL.

work of stone, and the gatehouse was fair and strong, and the walls on each side of it embattled." He also speaks of the moat which surrounded the house for defensive purposes—"the great ditch," no trace of which remains.

The house at that time was probably a rectangular structure of stone, with embattled walls round a central court, and a fortified gateway on the north side, the whole being surrounded by a moat. The interior wall of the south side is still practically of that period, and shows the rectangular windows, which were partly blocked up in Georgian times. The Duchess of

English ballad of the "Brave Lord Willoughby," termed by Charles Kingsley "the finest ballad of its kind in the English language." In 1589 he was given the command of the army sent by Elizabeth to the aid of Henry of Navarre, and in recognition of his services this monarch presented him with a fine diamond, which is still in the possession of the family. Peregrine was succeeded by his son Robert, created Earl of Lindsey in 1626, who on petitioning Parliament was allowed to act as Lord Great Chamberlain of England in right of his mother, Mary de Vere, daughter of the Earl



THE SECOND DRAWING-ROOM.

Suffolk married secondly Richard Bertie, M.P. for Lincoln, and became a prominent supporter of the reformed religion. Mention is made of Latimer's preaching at Grimsthorpe, and the Duchess and her husband afterwards took refuge on the Continent. On her return to England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the Duchess is described as living at Grimsthorpe in great state and splendour, and her household accounts are still preserved.

Her son Peregrine, Lord Willoughby, served with distinction in the Low Countries, acting as Governor there after Leicester's recall. His prowess in the field is celebrated in the old

of Oxford, in whose family this office had been hereditary since the reign of Henry I. Lord Lindsey settled down in Lincolnshire, and devoted himself to the improvement of his property. At great cost he succeeded in draining 35,000 acres of the Lindsey Level, and induced farmers to erect buildings there and settle down to cultivate the land, when the agitation against the drainage of the fens, in which Oliver Cromwell, then member for Huntingdon, took so prominent a part, proved fatal to his schemes. The fen men suddenly broke in, destroying the buildings, killing the cattle, and breaking down the dykes. After the assassination of Buckingham,

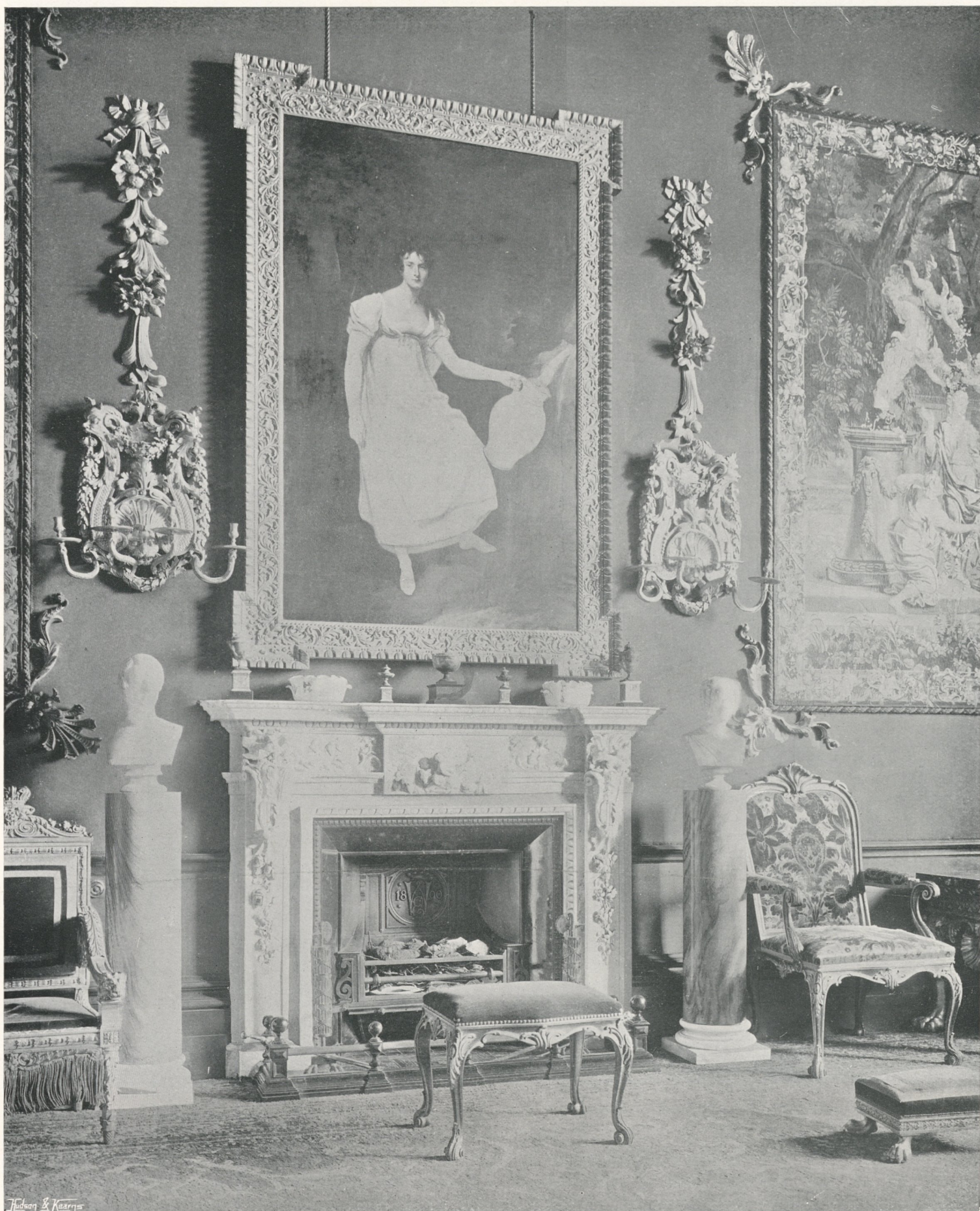


THE GREAT DINING-ROOM.

Lord Lindsey was made Admiral of the Fleet, and on the outbreak of the Civil War was given command of the King's army—a command, according to Clarendon, “to which he was quite equall.” He was shot in the thigh at Edgehill. Both he and his son Montagu were taken prisoners, and he succumbed to his wounds in a few hours. Montagu, the second Earl, was liberated, and commanded the King's Guard on several occasions, being wounded at the battle of Naseby. He attended the King to the last,

and was one of the four peers who offered themselves to suffer in his stead as the counsellors who had advised the measures imputed to him as criminal. This magnanimous proposal only procured them the melancholy satisfaction of bearing the body of Charles I. to its last resting-place in St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

Robert, fourth Earl of Lindsey, was created Marquis of Lindsey in 1706 and Duke of Ancaster and Kesteven in 1715. He employed Sir John Vanbrugh to alter and enlarge the



CHIMNEY-PIECE IN GREAT DINING-ROOM.

*KING JAMES'S DRAWING-ROOM.*

house, and, according to the old plans, they proposed reconstructing the whole building. However, the entrance and the north front were all that were eventually done, and since these alterations the house has remained much as it was then left, presenting an interesting combination of the different periods of architecture. The Vanbrugh addition comprises the great hall, an imposing apartment in the classic style, with massive square columns supporting round arches, above which is a second arcade of similar character rising to the lofty roof. The floor is of stone, intersected with a design in black marble which was procured from quarries in the park. On the wall facing the entrance are frescoes of the sovereigns of England who made grants of land to the family of Willoughby, from William the Conqueror to George I., the then reigning monarch; and here hang the colours of the 87th Regiment of Foot, raised by Peregrine, third Duke of Ancaster, and commanded by his son Robert, fourth Duke, in the American War of Independence.

Handsome stairways, with balustrades of finely hammered ironwork, give access to the chapel in the north-western tower, which is also part of Vanbrugh's work, and contains some very fine plaster decorations, and to the eastern

wing on the opposite side, where are situated the State apartments. The dining-room walls are hung with a magnificent set of tapestry, woven in Brussels towards the end of the seventeenth century. The ceiling was painted by Sir James Thornhill, and here are the State chairs used by George III., George IV., Queen Victoria, the Prince Consort, and the present King as Prince of Wales, in the House of Lords, these being perquisites appertaining to the office of Lord Great Chamberlain. In the first drawing-room is an interesting picture of James I., and the dress in which he is painted, together with the saddle on which he rode to his Coronation, are preserved at Grimsthorpe. Portraits of the two first Earls of Lindsey, and some fine pieces of Chippendale furniture, are also in this room. In the large central drawing-room and the smaller one leading out of it are portraits of Charles I. and his family by Van Dyck, and one of Mary Panton, wife of Peregrine, third Duke of Ancaster, who was Mistress of the Robes to Queen Charlotte, and who is painted by Hudson in a fancy dress, with a view of the old Rotunda at Ranelagh in the distance. There are also pictures of her husband and of the fifth Duke and his wife, all by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and an allegorical picture of Robert, fourth Duke of Ancaster, by Cosway,

as a knight in armour, with his sister, Lady Cholmondeley, as Fame crowning him with a wreath of laurels. The tables on which George IV and Queen Victoria signed their Coronation oaths, a Louis XV. clock out of the old House of Lords, a remarkably fine set of chairs of the same period upholstered in tapestry, and two beautiful marble mantel-pieces, are amongst some of the most notable features in these rooms.

The State bedroom lies at the end of these apartments, and beyond that again is a little room called the Birdcage, from its old Japanese paper and quaint decorations after Chippendale's Chinese manner. It is situated in the King John tower, and the vaulted roof remains both here and in the room beneath, with the old newel staircase. Chippendale's Chinese style has also been employed in a sitting-room in the western wing, called the Chinese Room, which has doors of beautiful old lacquer work. "Morning" and "Evening," by Hogarth, which hang in another sitting-room, called the Hunting Parlour, a picture of Benjamin by Zauberan, some interesting Holbeins, and a collection of curious sporting pictures by Stubbs, are only a few of the many other art treasures. Grimsthorpe also contains fine examples of English, Dutch, French, and Italian furniture, besides a large and varied collection of Sèvres, Chelsea, and Oriental china. The gold plate in the illustration consists of ewers and basins used at the Coronation banquets, which were the due of the Lord Great Chamberlain.

Lady Barbara Priscilla Bertie, whose portrait by Sir Joshua hangs in the third drawing-room,

became Baroness Willoughby de Eresby in her own right on the death of her brother Robert, fourth Duke of Ancaster. On the death of her uncle Brownlow, the fifth Duke, in 1809, the dukedom became extinct, and the earldom of Lindsey passed to the nearest male heir, General Bertie of Uffington. This Baroness Willoughby married Sir Peter Burrell, and, in order to act as her deputy in the office of Lord Great Chamberlain, he was created a peer, and chose the title of Gwydyr, the name of his wife's estate in North Wales, which came into the family through the marriage of Mary Wynn, daughter and heiress of Sir Richard Wynn of Gwydyr, with Robert, first Duke of Ancaster. The first Lord Gwydyr acted as Deputy Lord Great Chamberlain at the trial of Warren Hastings in Westminster Hall, and the seals with which he sealed the passes are preserved at Grimsthorpe. Their son, Peter Robert, married, in 1807, the Hon. Clementina Sarah Drummond, daughter and heiress of James Lord Perth. He succeeded his father as the second Lord Gwydyr, but assumed the older title of Willoughby de Eresby on the death of his mother, Baroness Willoughby, in 1828. His only son, Alberic, dying unmarried in 1870, the title of Gwydyr passed to the nearest male heir, his first cousin, who is the present holder of the title, while the barony of Willoughby de Eresby was called out of abeyance in favour of his eldest sister, the widow of the first Lord Aveland. The present Earl of Ancaster is her son, and succeeded her in 1888 as the twenty-fifth holder of the title of Willoughby de Eresby, which dates back to the year 1313. In 1892 he was raised to the earldom of Ancaster.