

BRADFIELD, CULLOMPTON, DEVON.

DEVONSHIRE, peculiarly rich in beautiful houses as it is, has, perhaps, no interiors that can match those at Bradfield, the seat of Sir William Hood Walrond. The house stands in a very beautiful country between the height of Black Down and the river Culm, sheltered in the hollow, and amid very winsome surroundings, on the left bank of the river.

There is something very gratifying to national pride in the knowledge that the Walronds belong to a considerable class of long-lineaged English gentlemen who have lived upon their ancestral acres for centuries. They came into possession of Bradfield, or, as it was then called, Bradfelle, apparently before the time of Henry III., and the original deed of conveyance by Fulke Paynel is still in existence. To Richard Walrond, the grantee, followed William, and then three Johns, after whom came two more Williams and three more Johns, and Humphreys and Henrys afterwards began to

make their appearance, and so we come down to modern days. Various gentlemen of this many-linked chain married the heiresses of Stowford, Ufflet, Whitinge, and perhaps others.

Bradfield has not had an eventful history. So far as records show, the storms of civil strife seem to have passed it by, and its possessors have lived the useful lives of country gentlemen from generation to generation, taking their part in local affairs, and in some of those events in which the men of Devon have been prominent. The earliest and almost the only notice of buildings at Bradfield in mediæval times is that John Walrond had a licence for his oratory there in May, 1332. He, doubtless, had his house also, but of that every trace has vanished. The position of the chapel may well have been on the north side of the existing house, between two large clipped yews, and this part of the ground still retains the name of the chapel yard.

The earlier parts of the existing building appear to go back to the beginning of the



THE PORCH.

*THE DRAWING-ROOM.*



THE DRAWING-ROOM, WEST SIDE.

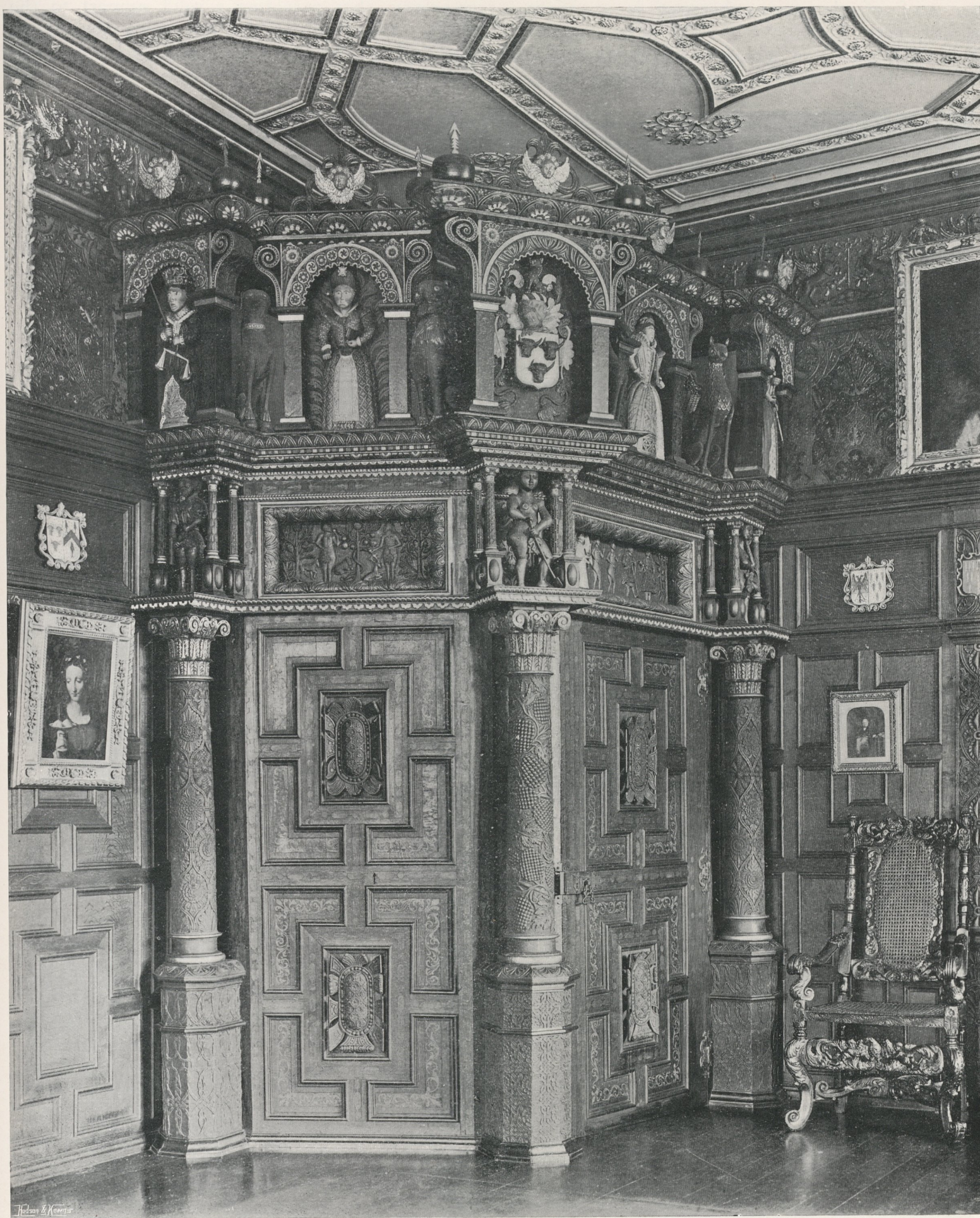
sixteenth century, the remainder of the structure having been erected probably in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. The words "Vivat E. Rex" on the north wall may possibly record the completion of the second house at Bradfield, perhaps on the accession of Edward VI. The dates 1592 and 1604 are elsewhere to be seen in the edifice. The house owes nearly all its charm as a domestic structure to the late Sir John Walrond, who took it in hand

about the year 1860, and, with the assistance of a good architect, very conscientiously and completely restored it. The house had fallen into some decay, and the south wall, being in a very dilapidated state, had to be rebuilt. The same was the case on the north side, and the opportunity was seized of effecting some alterations.

The hall, which has a singularly beautiful and remarkable interior, is the oldest part of the



THE HALL.



THE ANGLE DOOR IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.

existing structure. When Sir John Walrond began his work, this splendid chamber was in rather a deplorable state, and the restoration led to some interesting discoveries. On the removal of the plastering which an uninstructed generation had placed upon the walls, jambs of former windows were found in the east wall, and it was discovered that there had been a window over the doorway. The grand old hammer-beam

roof is the great feature, and it remains in its integrity, for, although new timbers were introduced where necessary, and decayed carvings replaced by new, the utmost care was taken to preserve everything that could safely be retained. Here are combined all the glories of a mediæval roof—fine hammer-beams with carved angels, a very deep and much-enriched cornice, tracery between the trusses, and carved pendants. A

fine roof of the same character is at Wear Gifford, near Torrington in the same county. Decayed as the roof was, none of it was taken down, it being raised *in situ* to the true level,

masonry, thus providing a solid support to the roof. Every bit of the old wood that could be kept remains, and what could not be preserved has been reproduced. The panelling is of the



PANELLING IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.

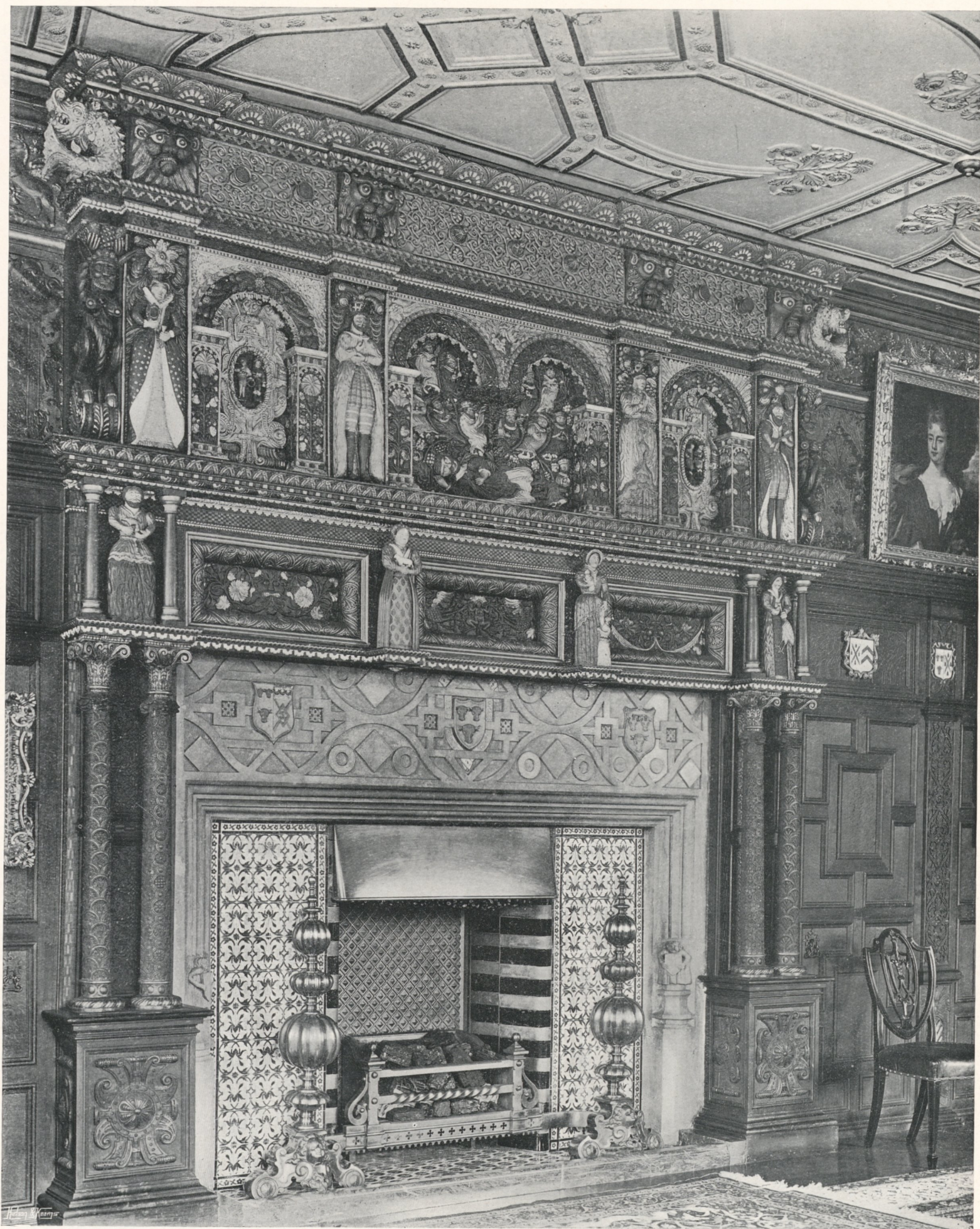
and thoroughly repaired and strengthened. There was a fine mullioned window of eight lights in width on the east side, but this had been an insertion, and, at the restoration of the house, it was replaced by two windows, separated by

folded linen pattern, and in the cornice are heads curiously carved. Classic features mark the later taste, the whole effect, however, being that of Tudor or even earlier times.

One quaint survival is a dog-gate, such as



THE SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF THE HALL.



CHIMNEY-PIECE IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.

was used in former times to prevent dogs going to the upper apartments. The minstrels' gallery is at the south end of the hall, adjacent to the old buttery and the kitchen, and there were curious openings between the buttery and the gallery, the use of which was not apparent, but it has been surmised that they were to enable refreshments to be handed up to the musicians. Two large angelic figures with scrolls are on

the wall at the other end of the great apartment, where is the dais. The shields of arms painted upon the window jambs are similar to those which existed before the restoration, and, with the exception of the substitution of two windows for the great window or many lights on the east side, no changes were made. The restoration involved the removal of many coats of white paint, which an evil taste had applied

to the woodwork. This noble apartment is 44ft. long, and more than 21ft. wide. The pictures show how exquisite is its detail, and reproduce the charm which makes it peculiarly satisfying to the eye, with its true domestic and restful character.

A doorway from the dais leads into the magnificent drawing-room, which is 34ft. long by 20ft. wide, and has one of the most charming interiors that can be conceived. The ceiling is rich and elaborate in its panelling and adornment, and the finely moulded oak-work of the walls, and the exquisite and tasteful carving of the pilasters, will be noticed. The design is unusual, and the armorial enrichments add character to it. The mantel-piece is a splendid example of the quaint Elizabethan or Jacobean work. There are elaborated and freely-treated Corinthian shafts, supporting an entablature with panels, and figures standing between them. These are extremely curious. On the right is a female holding a goose by the neck; another figure is of a woman with a baby in her arms and a child standing by her knee; a third figure appears to be holding a lamb. All are quaint and odd, according to the spirit of the century in which they were produced. The upper range of panelling has also curious figures, and inlaid and enriched work under the archings. The upper part is painted in colours and with silver and gold, and the frieze is of fine Spanish leather. An extremely interesting feature of the drawing-room is the internal porch or lobby, which has enriched panelling, elaborate carving, quaint figures, and armorial achievements of the Walronds. This was once disfigured with white paint, but the work was tastefully restored, and is painted in various colours and silver and gold, the lower scroll part being inlaid. The effect of the enrichment and colours is very beautiful and harmonious, and the drawing-room makes a magnificent apartment, full of the character of the English domestic life of the seventeenth century.

At the other end of the hall, as has been said, were the buttery and kitchen, but in the restoration and adaptation of the house to modern means a change was effected. These

offices occupied a large part of the south front, and it was decided, therefore, to build them afresh elsewhere in the house, and to create another family room. Moreover, the porch attached to the hall being inconvenient for the approach of carriages, it was considered desirable to make a new entrance here on the south side, and to relieve the flatness of this front of the mansion by adding bay windows in exact keeping with the structure. It is worthy of note that in the old kitchen, with its large fireplace and separate hatch, was an arrangement for turning the spits by water-power, a small stream being conducted close to the kitchen to work a diminutive water-wheel which set the spits in motion. Staircases at either end of the hall lead to the upper apartments, and on the north side was a small window at the level of the large gallery on the upper floor, the object being, as is supposed, to enable the ladies who had retired to ascertain what the gentlemen were doing below, and to witness the revels which took place in their absence.

From what has been said, it will be observed that Bradfield had the customary arrangement of a Tudor mansion. There was the great hall, of unusual magnificence, as the centre point of the house, with the lobby, minstrels' gallery, buttery, and kitchens on the one hand, and the dais at the other end giving access to the drawing-room and the private apartments. In very few English houses is such richness displayed as in the carvings and panellings, and the late Sir John Walrond and his architect did a splendid work in recovering this noble house from partial decay, and particularly in removing coats of paint and disfigurements which a period of bad taste had caused to be applied and introduced, while, on the other hand, with scrupulous care everything that was decayed was replaced. Our pictures will show that the chambers are hung with portraits of members of the Walrond family and their kindred and friends, and that their marriages are recorded in armorial achievements which are used with good effect decoratively. The colours are harmonious, and the whole effect is rich, good, and eminently beautiful.