

OLD PLACE, LINDFIELD, SUSSEX.

THE subject of the following article is the interior design and decoration of Old Place, at Lindfield, in Sussex, and it is treated from the point of view of its origin and adornment. Mr. Kempe, its creator and owner, has for nearly thirty years devoted his trained hand and intellect to its building and decoration. The result represents, probably, the highest development of contemporary taste and skill in artistic design, subordinated to modern needs and requirements. No comfort or luxury is sacrificed to appearances,

yet it would be difficult, indeed, to find a house of such calibre and consideration, so beautiful and so attractive to live in. It is a "Palace of Art," but one in touch with the realities of the best side of life, and of which the soul, unlike that of the builder of Tennyson's "Palace of Art," could never grow weary. Mr. Kempe's attainments in many branches of art are well known, but, like other craftsmen, he enrolls many arts in his service, and in the interior of Old Place we see art in all forms, and all in due relation.

When a house has been created, and adorned within and without, we may take it that the idea of the perfect whole takes almost final shape in the mind of its master before it finds expression in stone, wood, and brick without, and in tapestry, painted glass, and exquisite adornment within. The imagination which can project a fine idea into such work must spring from a mind well equipped with a practical knowledge of the arts, but it must be imagination of a high order in itself. We may, for a moment, indulge in a comparison between a "lordly dwelling-house" as projected by imagination alone, the imagination of Lord Tennyson when a young man, and the creation and growth of a real house as projected and carried out by the builder and owner of Old Place. The builder of the Palace of Art, rears it as a purely abstract creation. Standing on that "huge crag platform, smooth as burnished brass," it is detached from the world and its associations. That ideal builder has no "grace of congruity" with which to make his ideas fit in. The



THE EAST GABLES.

isolation of the Palace is as complete as that of his soul would be if it could have its wish, and reign apart, a quiet king. There are no six centuries of Sussex village life adjoining it as they adjoin Old Place, no natural order from which the new and beautiful house is to arise in due time and place. So the four courts are reared with their dragon fountains, and the statues stand paired on the terraces, and cloisters and corridors rise, and the windows are filled with their slow flaming crimson fire, and the tapestries woven to represent all kinds of English scenes,

The projecting bays, rising from the ground to the roof, and capped with gable ends and barge-boards, are repeated again and again in the outside design of the new and great house. Beautifully and effectively has this been done. The Chaloner house is intact. The hall, which had become a kitchen, is again a hall, forming one of the side entrances to the new house. The economy of space usual in these houses of the smaller landed gentry of the sixteenth century is still seen—the place where was the larder under the stairs, the cellar leading down



THE DRAWING-ROOM.

as if they were a record of a lost country, and not part of a living one.

Passing from the palace of the imagination to the beautiful house of which we write, we shall find at once that its builder has not used his imagination to ignore historical facts and start on "bed rock," but to use the past and the real as the proper nucleus for the expansion of his ideas. An old house "set the note" for the new. It was a modest half-timbered home of a gentleman of good family, one of the Chaloners. It was not large, but dignified and well equipped and decorated, both within and without, and was built about the year 1590.

from it. The old drawing-room scarcely needed repair. The Chaloners' mantel-piece, with its last echo of mediævalism in the arch and spandrels and coat of arms, its Renaissance mouldings and ornaments above, and the very handsome arcaded work in ancient oak above it, the panelled recess by the chimney, and the little secret cupboard—all these are kept as they were. So, too, above, are the two best bedrooms of the Chaloner era. One, like the drawing-room, has a flat ceiled roof with oak beams, and a fine mantel-piece and panelling like those below. The other has an open roof, and the bay window, interrupted at the top, reappears



THE DIAL-ROOM.



THE ENTRANCE CHAMBER OF THE HOUSE OF THE CHALONERS.

in a small two-light window with two figures, inserted by the present owner, of "Adam and Eve," who give the name to the bedroom.

Leaving this ancient structure, and passing from what was good but modest in calibre in

a studied simplicity, leads through the usual screen into the great parlour, now so called, but it is, in fact, what would, in the days when houses of this kind and calibre were built, have been the great hall, where the master and the



THE GREAT PARLOUR.

the days of Elizabeth, we see its development into something great and ennobled in existing times.

Design and decoration, plan and ornament, are here so combined that the visitor tends to take the first for granted and to linger more on the decorative treatment. From the left of the old place, right down the north side of the house, runs a service passage, itself a fine feature of the interior, and panelled with flat and rare panelling, some being carved in low relief with the emblems and crown of Charles V. of Spain. As an instance of the faithfulness with which the old has been respected while the new was added, we may mention that the extremity of this passage was a side kitchen of the old place. The pump, jacketed in livery of oak, stands there still against the wall. Crosswise through the new house runs the entrance, passing through this passage and out into the garden beyond through a porchway, the whole giving a series of four doorways, when all stand open, with garden and sundial seen through all. The entrance lobby or hall, panelled and "doored" with the finest workmanship in wood, but of

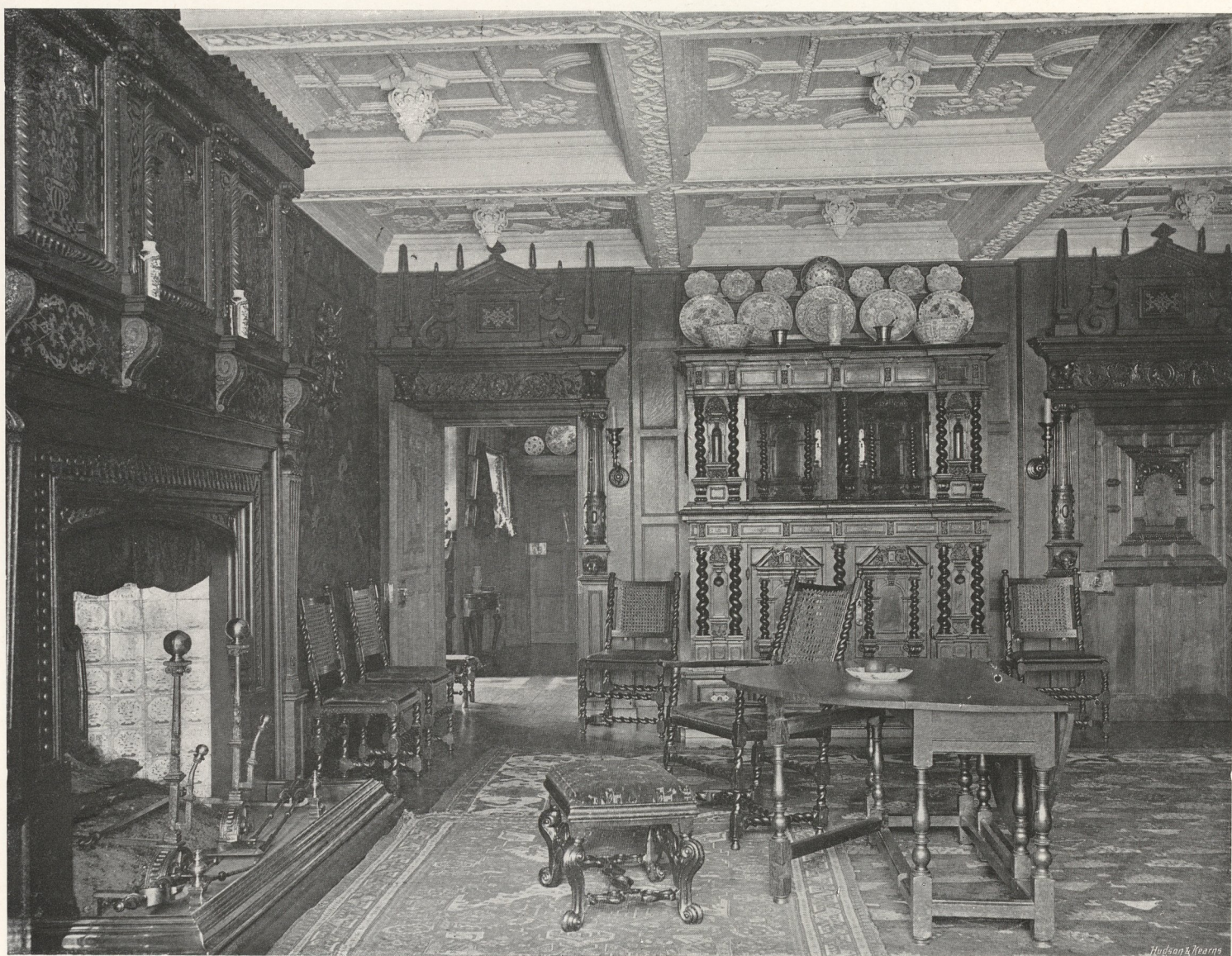
lady, the servants and retainers, met at meals and spent most of their spare time. Here we see such a room as it would, or might, have been in Elizabethan times, but far more highly decorated, far more comfortable, and more beautiful in detail, while not less fine in general design. It is a mediæval hall developed to its artistic conclusion. The finish of the wood, workmanship, and depth of the panels, the spare but effective use of inlaying, the reproduction on a magnificent scale in the mantel-piece of the moulding and decoration of the mantel-piece in the old house, the bright sheen of the many-candled hanging lamps—these are some of the "points" to be noted.

The furniture in each room is subsidiary to the general effect, but the "pieces" are all of exceptional interest and first-class design. Southern Germany has contributed largely to the furnishing of many rooms; while the East—still the unchanging East in regard to beauty in textile fabrics—contributes the carpeting, not the least important seat of colour. People speak of the fine workmanship of old times. But where, in any ancient English home, even if

designed by Wren and carved under the eye of Gibbons, would you find woodwork better done than this, made, under Mr. Kempe's own direction, by the men trained to carry out his ideas? As we truly believe, in none.

The bookroom, the dining-room, and the drawing-room form a series of equal but varied beauty onwards through the house. The first is among the most attractive of the many smaller chambers. The distinguishing lofty bay window lights it, and to gain in brightness and cheerfulness the panelling and book-shelves are in flat design, with a flat cresting of English Renaissance, and the oak left light. Most choice volumes adorn these shelves—the Nuremburg Chronicle, in its original binding, among ranks of other fine folios and quartos in all the solemn livery of leather, gold, and vellum. From this room onwards, and indeed throughout the house, the square bay windows are alike one of the best features in the design, and perhaps the most splendid contribution to the ornament of each chamber. They are alike in form, and with rectangular clear glass set in leaden frames.

memorials should be. The escutcheons and mantlings are of fine design, but the colours cannot be described. So in the dining-room, one of the most completely satisfactory rooms of all, is a window of Friendship. In its lights are set the arms of the old friends of the host and designer and the honoured guests at his table. The escutcheons are hung on wreathed columns, “with power to add to their number” on many columns still unadorned. There is a subtle grace in the tribute thus paid to friendship, in this insertion of something so personal as the armorial bearings of another in the fabric of the house. Among the shields are those of Lord Wolseley, of Mr. Bodley, the famous architect, of the Archbishop of York, of Lord Halifax, and other frequent guests, and beneath is the motto, “*Parvula non parvæ pignora amicitiae.*” The ancient hangings on the walls of this fine room are of a green tint, against which large silver sconces shine, and foliage tapestry scarcely distinguishable from ancient examples, but recently woven in the looms of France, testifies to the skill of the modern weaver



THE DINING-ROOM.

But in the lights blaze those jewels of stained glass, magnificent in colour, beautiful and appropriate in design, of which Mr. Kempe is such a master. The bookroom window is devoted to family alliances, heraldic and personal, as such

when working under the educating influences of the student in ancient art.

The drawing-room has a highly-decorated ceiling, the roses being embossed in gold on a green ground. Here, too, is an exquisite

window, in softer colours than in the other large chambers. The circles represent couplets from Sir Walter Scott's stanza, "In peace Love tunes the shepherd's reed," etc., with delicately-painted historical scenes representing all the varied triumphs of Cupid, as history and romance tell the tale of conquest.

The upstairs chambers are no less carefully considered than those below. Not only the bedrooms, but the beds, are such as might have been looked for in the palaces of the seventeenth century. Readers of Mr. Law's "History of Hampton Court" will remember the magnificence of the beds owned by the Tudors, and the detail in which their hangings and furniture were recorded in the Royal account books. Without imitating these inventories, it must be owned that the sight of perfect and comfortable beds of the seventeenth century, with the original posts and pillars and much the same curtains

and coverlets as were then in use, is a pleasant surprise in a bedroom. Here, too, is more of the exquisite glass painting in the windows: sundials on the panes telling the hours, and posies and arabesques like gems.

The dial-room, here shown, is matched in beauty by many others. Much point is given by the presence of innumerable treasures of bric-a-brac, fine china, paintings, furniture, and metal-work. But of these the reader will gather a more complete idea from the pictures of the interior which accompany this article. The house is set, be it remembered, with its back to an ancient high road, at the top of the long and picturesque street of the village of Lindfield. The church is hard by, and in front stretch fine formal gardens, with avenues of yew and clipped limes, sundials, fountains, and grass walks, in keeping with the present dimensions and character of the house.



A WINDOW IN THE DIAL-ROOM.