

WENTWORTH CASTLE, YORKSHIRE.

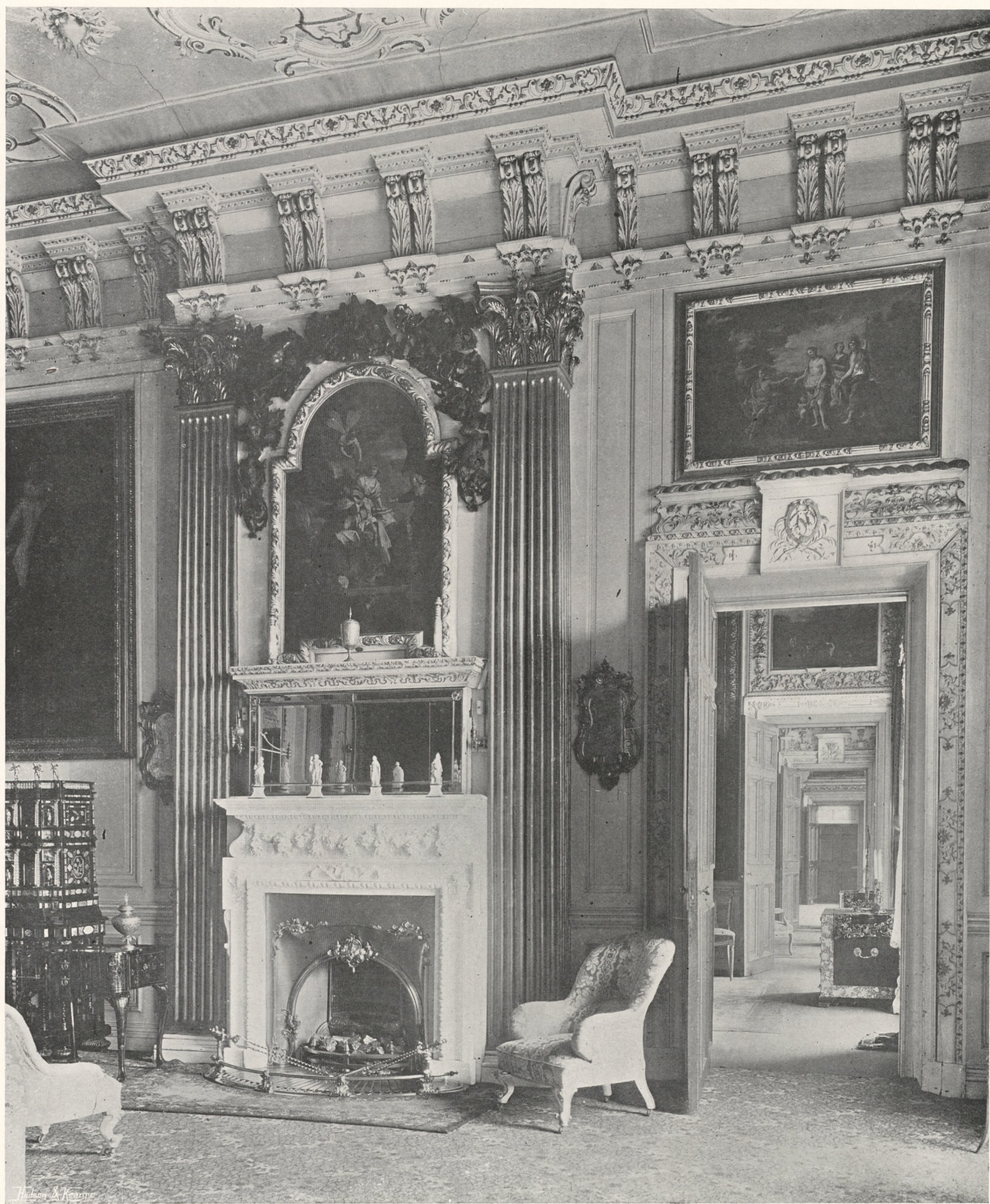
THE stately classic house of Mr. Vernon-Wentworth stands some three miles south of Barnsley, in the Yorkshire parish of Silkstone, upon high land between two streams of the Dove, commanding a magnificent prospect, especially towards the east. It is within the township of Stainborough, but the name of that ancient place has almost been lost in that of the Castle itself. In early times this locality belonged to a family which appears never to have had a surname until, in the reign of Henry III., one Isabel, an heiress, carried it, on her marriage with Sir Robert Everingham, into a family which held it for some centuries. The Everinghams gradually sank, and in their fallen fortunes, in 1596, they alienated some part of

the estate to Thomas Cutler. The new possessor, who belonged to one of those families of lesser degree which struggled to the front in Tudor times, afterwards secured the whole estate, the Everinghams being known there no more.

The Cutlers, however, became men of greater note, and Sir Gervase, who was knighted by James I., married, as his second wife, the daughter of John, Earl of Bridgewater. He was a stout Royalist in the Civil Wars, raised a large body of men at his own charge, and carrying the family plate, to the value of £1,000, to Pontefract, to be coined into money for the King, died at the Castle there. The son of the Cavalier, another Sir Gervase, was



THE OLD HALL.



QUEEN ANNE'S SITTING-ROOM.

both extravagant and dissolute, and was not the man to repair fortunes wasted in the evil days of war. Shortly before he died, or at about the time of his death, his estates at Stainborough passed by sale to Thomas Wentworth, Lord Raby, descended from a family settled at Wentworth, near Rotherham, from very early times, which had given birth to the great Earl of Strafford. After the Earl's execution, the estates and honours of Wentworth Woodhouse were restored to his son, but, when this second Earl died, in 1675, his title of Baron Raby came to

his cousin Thomas Wentworth, the builder of Wentworth Castle.

Wentworth was a remarkable man in his time, ever a soldier first, coming of an old fighting stock, for his grandfather had been slain for the King at Marston Moor. More of a soldier was Wentworth than a diplomatist, though diplomacy was forced upon him. After the Revolution he became a cornet in Lord Colchester's regiment of horse, and went to Scotland in the expedition against Dundee, after which he was fighting in Flanders until the

Peace of Ryswick. He was in the vanguard at Steinkirk, 1692, where his squadron was cut to pieces and himself wounded, and as a reward for his valour William III. promised him early promotion. In the next year he became aide-de-camp to the King and major of the first troop of Guards. In 1695 he was with William at the siege of Namur, where one of his brothers was killed, and it was shortly afterwards that he inherited the title of Raby, when his cousin, the second Earl of Strafford, died. It was a

somewhat barren inheritance, for the Earl left his estate to Thomas Watson, son of Lord Rockingham. Raby was given command of the Royal Regiment of Dragoons in 1697, and advanced rapidly until he became a lieutenant-general ten years later. Long before this he had been drawn into the diplomatic circle. He was despatched in 1701 as envoy at the coronation of Frederick, Elector of Brandenburg, as King of Prussia. In the next year, fighting again, he had his horse shot under him, and lost



THE LONG GALLERY.

another brother. He was reluctant to relinquish military service, but, being a great favourite with Frederick, he was sent to Berlin as envoy in 1703, and became Ambassador Extraordinary three years later. All along he was in close

Apparently a substantial mansion of the Stuart character stood there, some parts of which still exist. Probably the soldier-diplomatist did not greatly alter it at this period. He was, however, weary of his post abroad, and represented



THE GRAND STAIRWAY.

relations with Marlborough, and, though a diplomatic Minister, took some part in the military operations as a volunteer.

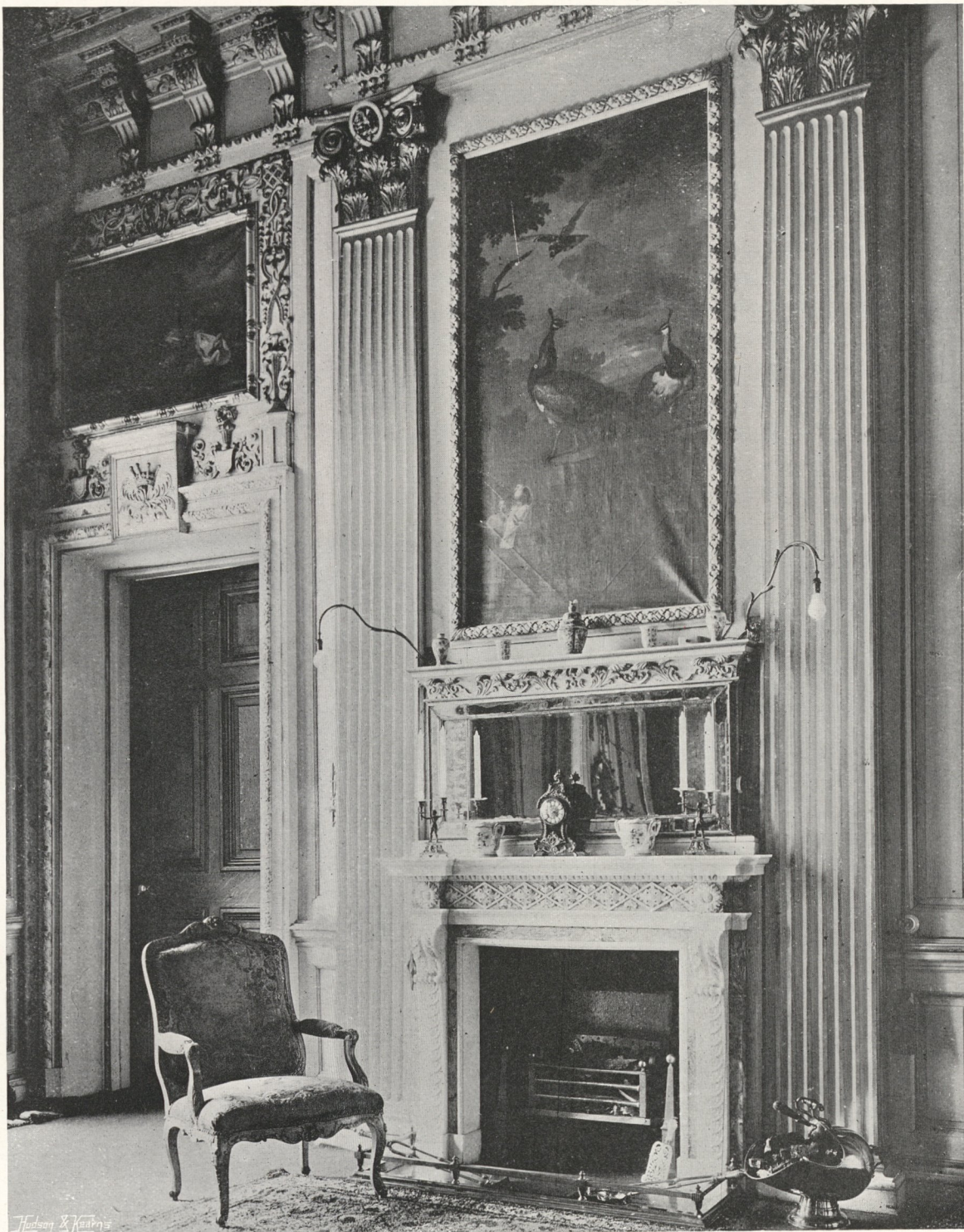
He was in England from May to September, 1708, and it was at this date that he bought the estate of the Cutlers at Stainborough.

to Marlborough his desire to be relieved of it, to be made a Privy Councillor, and to have his cousin's peerage of Earl of Strafford called out in his own person. Although Swift said that he was wholly illiterate, and could not spell, he was a man of taste and art judgment, and in

the autumn of 1708 he spent two months in Italy, where he bought many pictures. Before leaving Berlin, Frederick had presented him with a magnificent sword, set in diamonds and worth £15,000. In 1711 he was Ambassador at The Hague, and in that year his wishes were gratified, for he was made a member of the Privy Council and created Viscount Wentworth and Earl of Strafford, with special remainder to his brother Peter. He was one of the plenipotentiaries at The Hague to negotiate the terms of the Peace subsequently confirmed at Utrecht, and was made a Knight of the Garter, but the Treaty did not give universal satisfaction, and so much were the Commons incensed against Strafford that it was resolved to impeach him for high crimes and misdemeanours. His defence was delivered in the House of Lords, and no further action appears to have been taken. From that time onwards up to his death he lived mostly on his Yorkshire estates, where he greatly improved the old house of the Cutlers, created about it extensive ornamental grounds, and introduced many paintings and other works of art which he had purchased abroad. He died at Wentworth Castle in 1739.

William Wentworth, second Earl of Strafford of the new creation, who lived until 1791, was also a builder. He refronted his father's house after a design of his own, and did a great deal to beautify and enrich it with works of art. The grounds were much improved in his time. Horace Walpole was his intimate friend, and Wentworth Castle and its noble owner are constantly mentioned in the famous "Correspondence." Walpole was constantly looking forward to visiting the Castle, and when he went there he wrote: "This place is one of the very few that I really like. The situation, woods, views, are perfect in their kinds."

"Gramercy for your intention of seeing Wentworth Castle," he wrote to the Misses Berry in 1789; "it is my favourite of all great seats. Such a variety of ground, of wood and water, and almost all executed and disposed with so much taste by the present Earl. Mr. Gilpin sillily could see nothing but faults there. The new front, in my opinion, is one of the lightest and most beautiful buildings on earth; and, pray, like the



THE EAST TAPESTRY ROOM.

little Gothic edifice, and its position in the menagerie. I recommended it and had it drawn by Mr. Bentley from Chichester Cross." The Earl, like his father, was a collector, and spent much time abroad. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu met him in Rome in 1741, when he was a young man, and says, "he behaved himself really very modestly and genteely, and had lost the pertness he had acquired in his mother's assemblies." In the quadrangle of the house is a statue of this Earl by Rysbrack. He died

childless, and the title and estate went by the special remainder to Frederick Thomas, third Earl of Strafford, his cousin, who also died childless in 1799, when the estate passed to Mrs. Hatfield-Kaye, his sister.

The present owner is descended from Harriet, sister of the second Earl, who married Mr. Henry Vernon, of Hilton. When the estate passed to these descendants in the female line, by the will of Mrs. Hatfield-Kaye, Mr. Frederick Thomas William Vernon added the name of Wentworth.

Wentworth Castle, made what it is by these interesting men, is a great and stately erection, uniting some things that are old with the dignified aspect of great classic forms. There is a magnificent Hall, its panelled ceiling adorned with allegories in the manner of Verrio, supported by fluted Ionic columns, while the pavement is in black and white marble. The hand of Grinling Gibbons is traced in much of the fine wood-carving, in panels and friezes, and there are characteristic mantels supported by figures. The East Tapestry Room has rich fluted Corinthian pilasters and a boldly modelled ceiling; and

Queen Anne's Sitting Room is in the same style. According to the manner of the time, the apartments communicate with one another. The Great Stairway has a magnificent carved balustrade, admirable in its style and kind. Everywhere the panelling and decorative work are extremely good. The gem of the house is the Long Gallery, with its marble Corinthian columns and pilasters. This great and noble chamber has fine enriched entablatures and mouldings, and a coved ceiling.

Here are many works of the famous art collection, but the whole house is filled with interesting pictures. Some few are copies of great masters, and the authorship of some others may be disputed, but there is no gainsaying that the collection is one of the richest in the North of England. Much excellent sculpture is also in the house, and the tapestries are very remarkable.

It will be seen, therefore, that Wentworth Castle deserves to rank high among the stately places of the country, on account of its great personal interests and associations with prominent men, its architectural merits, and the richness of its extensive collections.



THE GREAT HALL.