

RUFFORD ABBEY, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

THE site of the Cistercian Abbey of Rufford was granted after the Dissolution by Henry VIII. to his favourite and courtly supporter, George Earl of Shrewsbury, and upon it subsequently rose the beautiful house whose interior we depict. From the family of the grantee Rufford passed to a member of the great Yorkshire house of Savile, with whose descendants it has ever since remained. Among was Sir Henry Savile, author of the "Scriptores post Bedam," provost of Eton, and founder of the Savilian professorship at Oxford, and the memorials of the greatness and sometimes of the loyalty of the family to the Stuart cause may be seen in stucco over the Yorkshire fireplaces about

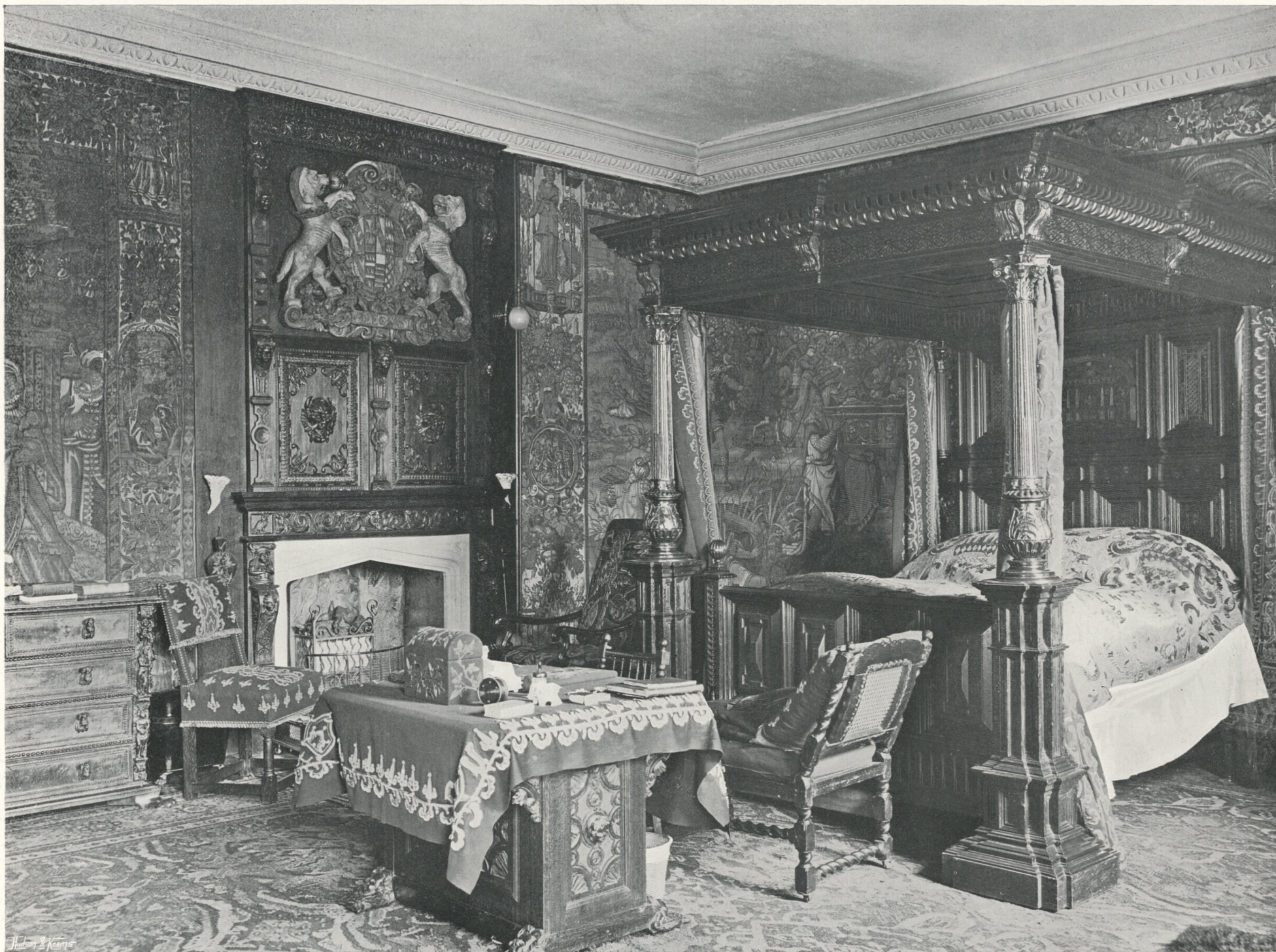
which its members gathered. The first of the family to possess Rufford was Sir George Savile of Thornhill, son-in-law of the Earl of Shrewsbury, the mansion coming to its new owner through his marriage with Lady Mary Talbot. The second baronet was a man of great note in his time, prominent in many affairs, who had the honour of entertaining King James and Prince Charles at his house, to enjoy there the diversion of the chase. It lay in a country of the greenwood, and the ferny depths of the old forest of Sherwood resounded many a time with the hunter's horn.

"Fear God, Honour the King," is a motto in one of the Savile houses in Yorkshire, and truly



THE NORTH END OF THE LONG GALLERY.

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SIR GEORGE SAVILE'S ROOM.

in the Civil War they stood strongly for loyalty. When Fairfax and the Earl of Newcastle were struggling for the mastery in the Yorkshire cradle of their origin, Sir William, the third baronet, was a conspicuous leader for the King. He was Governor of Sheffield Castle, and after his death the place was stoutly defended by his widow, a daughter of the Lord Keeper Coventry. As valiantly as the Countess of Derby held out at Lathom House did Lady Savile keep the Royal flag flying at Sheffield, and not until the walls were battered in did she authorise the surrender of the place. The grim men of the Parliament could appreciate her quality, and she marched out with

part of his father's house, which he said reminded him of "the rags of Rome," but leaving untouched the fine front of the edifice. Much of the internal adornment belongs to this time. Upon the death of the second and last Marquis a cousin, Sir John Savile, succeeded to the estates and the baronetcy.

The last of the Savile baronets to possess Rufford was Sir George Savile, a great statesman, and a compeer of Pitt and Burke, whom posterity has almost forgotten. He wrought great things for religious liberty by bringing in the Catholic Relief Bill in 1780; he foresaw all the evils of the American War; he was an ardent Parliamentary reformer, opposing the exclusion of Wilkes on the



THE LONG GALLERY.

all the honours of war, colours flying and drums beating, to lay down arms, and to be herself conveyed to Rufford, where, her time being come, she gave birth to a boy.

That boy was Sir George Savile, created Lord Savile of Elland and Viscount Halifax, afterwards Earl of Halifax, and then Marquis of Halifax. The famous Marquis loved Rufford dearly, and a letter of his remains, written in July, 1679, when he was detained by Court duties at Windsor, wherein he deplores that the summer was passing, and that he saw no chance of setting eyes on his poor old Rufford. This notable statesman almost rebuilt the mansion, destroying some

ground of its unconstitutional character, and was ever fearless in exposing political immorality and fraud; and he was an energetic supporter of public works, such as the Eddystone and Spurn Lighthouses, and the network of Yorkshire canals. A fine monument of him is in York Minster. On his death, his estates passed to his nephew, John Lumley Savile, younger son of the Countess of Scarborough, and from him the present owner of Rufford is descended.

The house is approached through a fine gateway, its pillars surmounted by heraldic talbots, and by a great lime avenue, forming the green framework through which the old gables and



THE GREAT HALL.

pleasing frontage of the house are first seen. The Great Hall, with its richly-panelled walls and Flemish tapestries, its splendid carved Jacobean screen, its noble mantel, its oak-beamed roof, and its red-brick floor, is a very beautiful and imposing apartment, possessing many memorials of the Civil War, portraits of Sir William Savile, the Cavalier, and his stout-hearted lady, of Arabella Stuart, and of other noted people. The Long Gallery, though not retaining all its old character, is a very notable chamber, and is hung with fine Flemish tapestry. The tapestries are, indeed, a great

and order of the Garter, which was painted by the late Mr. Augustus Savile, for some time Master of the Ceremonies to Queen Victoria, and a very successful amateur artist. In the Billiard Room hang portraits of Strafford by Van Dyck, of Barbara Countess of Scarborough by Reynolds, of Prince Rupert by Lely, and two others by the same hand, a delightful Romney of a former Lady Savile, and some others. The Chapel is interesting as having witnessed the marriage of the parents of unfortunate Arabella Stuart, and for its fine tapestries and old books of devotion.



THE CHAPEL.

feature of Rufford, and the room occupied by the Stuart king has especially fine examples, depicting the history of Esther, while another room is adorned with incidents from the life of Marcus Aurelius. Much of the furniture is extremely interesting, and includes splendid carved bedsteads of the time of Elizabeth and James, beautiful Jacobean cabinets and chairs, and other objects of Louis Quatorze and Louis Seize. The Library has a fine plaster ceiling much enriched, and some excellent wood-carving. The pictures include examples of Rembrandt, Teniers, Murillo, Gainsborough, Watteau, and Greuze. Over the mantelpiece in the Dining Room is a full-length portrait of the King, as Prince of Wales, wearing the robes

When the existing house was built, not all the ancient Abbey was destroyed, and many interesting architectural details remain. There are cellars which go back 700 years or more, and the servants' hall is an old monastic apartment. About the house is a beautiful undulating park, with many magnificent trees, and the green lawns and gay parterres, with their hedges of yew and holly, are very charming. A great cedar on the lawn is said to have been planted by Charles II., and a fine lake and a fish-pond margined by daffodils in the spring add much to the attractions of a great and beautiful mansion standing bravely as of old in the green woodland of Middle England.