

LANHYDROCK, CORNWALL.

THE beautiful Cornish seat of Lord Clifden, which presents many contrasts and resemblances to other houses of its date illustrated in this volume, stands near the high road from Bodmin to St. Austell. It is, unhappily, one of those places which have been devastated by fire, that agency of destruction which has visited so many of our venerable English houses. It can never be without a pang of keen regret that those who love the dear old dwelling-places of our sires, about which historic and family memories have clustered, learn that any one of them has perished in the flames. Fortunately the destruction which fell upon Lanhydrock in the disastrous night of April 4th, 1881, was not complete.

The south wing and the central portion perished almost entirely, but the long gallery and some other chambers on the east side were saved, with many of the treasures which had adorned the parts that were destroyed. Long since the house rose from its ashes, and now that the judicious hand of the builder and restorer has worked upon the place, assisted by the kindly influence of passing years, it is not easy to realise the terrible destruction that was wrought. It is a great thing to recover a house like this from the consuming ravages of fire, and Lord Clifden went the right way to work, reconstructing in the very spirit of the old times.

The estate lies in a very lovely part of Cornwall, upon the slope of a sylvan hill in



THE APPROACH.

the valley of the Fowey, and has in its neighbourhood old Lostwithiel, the ivy-mantled ruin of Restormel Castle, the rich woods of Boconnoc, and many beauties of the romantic river course. In this neighbourhood is Dozmare Pool, sometimes identified with the "middle mere" of Tennyson, into which the bold Sir Bedivere flung the brand Excalibur, which "Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon":

"So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipt the surface rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

The country people say that thereby lives, or lived, the grim giant Tregeagle, condemned for his misdeeds to labour ever to empty the pool with a limpet shell, whereat he howls despairingly in the hollow voice of the night-wind. Some identify the giant with one Tregeagle, a dishonest steward of Lord Robartes's, the builder of Lanhydrock, which steward cruelly crushed the tenants, rose by his frauds, and became a harsh and arbitrary magistrate.

So much may serve as a prelude to our account of this remarkable place. The house was built by the second Lord Robartes of the earlier creation. The family had risen to great wealth by the profit of tin and wool; and Richard Robartes of Truro, son and heir of John Robartes of the same, was knighted at Whitehall in 1616. His wealth made him a victim of extortion, and it is said that a sum of £12,000 was wrung out of him on that occasion under a threat of prosecution. Robartes was raised to the baronetage in July, 1621, and, through the influence of Buckingham, in January, 1624-25, was created a peer, with the title of Baron Robartes of Truro. When Buckingham was impeached by the House of Commons, it was charged against him that he had obliged Robartes to purchase his barony at the price of £10,000, and the new peer said, in June, 1627, that the money was "to have been employed on a special service for the late King."

The second Lord Robartes, who succeeded his father in 1634, allied himself with the Parliamentary party in the Civil War, and his house was the scene of some dramatic episodes. He was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall in 1642, and was a colonel of foot in Essex's army. He fought at Edgehill and in the first battle of Newbury, and had the rank of field-marshal under Essex. In May, 1644, a petition was presented to Parliament with the prayer that he might be made commander-in-chief in Devon and Cornwall, and the march of Essex into the West is popularly attributed to his influence. Lord Robartes was building his house at Lanhydrock in the years preceding the war, and it appears not to have been completed when the evil days came. Originally it was quadrangular, but a later proprietor removed the buildings on the east side, leaving the structure a hollow square. The north wing bore the date 1636, and the south wing

1642, but the gate-house, which is a most remarkable structure, was not erected until 1651, and bears over the arch the initials of the builder and his wife, with that date. Its weathered front, its massive towers, and its great round arch give it an air of greater antiquity than it really possesses. It might well have been the portal of an abbey, and it may be regarded as an interesting survival—or, perhaps, revival—of an older form, for the round arch looks Norman, and the loop-holes are such as cross-bowmen used. The house is approached by a fine old avenue, planted by the order of Lord Robartes in 1648.

The Long Gallery goes back to his time, and presents a very remarkable and attractive interior. The coved roof is elaborately panelled in high relief in an ingenious design, and is adorned with pendants, Biblical subjects, curious animals and birds, and other devices boldly sculptured. The fireplace is very remarkable, and a quaint figure subject above the mantel takes the place of the "pomp of heraldry" which usually occupies that position. The stone and plaster work are excellent. The dark-hued wainscot, the family portraits, the deeply-recessed windows on both sides, with their fluted pilasters and elaborate panelling, and the quaint old pieces of furniture, all go to complete an interior of truly domestic character, full of individual charm. This fine apartment belongs to the old family of long galleries of which many are illustrated in this volume, but it is of the less stately and more home-like class of that fraternity. Lord Robartes was a staunch Presbyterian, and here are still preserved his books, and those of his chaplain, one Hannibal Gammon, many of them well seasoned with bitter marginal notes against prelacy and popery.

Lord Robartes garrisoned his house for the Parliament, and took part in the fighting which preceded the surrender of Essex at Lostwithiel, and he escaped by taking ship to Plymouth. The headquarters of Essex were at Respryn, and those of the Royalists, under the courtly and gallant Sir Beville Grenville—grandson of the famous Sir Richard, hero of the Revenge—at Boconnoc. Lord Robartes must have suffered considerably, for his house was occupied by the Royalists, and his estates were assigned by the King to Sir Richard Grenville, while the fugitive's children were detained as prisoners. Parliament restored Lanhydrock to its original owner later on. In the proposals made to Charles at Uxbridge in January, 1645, it was requested that he should make Robartes an earl. After the passing of the Self-Denying Ordinance, the zeal of the Cornish peer began to cool, and, after the King's death, he took no part in public affairs, but at the Restoration his influence secured him a place in the Government. He was made a Privy Councillor and became Lord Deputy of Ireland, afterwards being made Lord Lieutenant, and he was raised to the dignity of Earl



THE GATE-HOUSE.



THE LONG GALLERY.

of Radnor in 1679. He was also Viscount Bodmin, but these titles became extinct in 1764, and the estates descended in the female line to Miss Anna Maria Hunt, who, in 1804, married the Hon. Charles Agar, son of the first Viscount Clifden. This gentleman represented East Cornwall in Parliament, and in his family a new barony of Robartes of Lanhydrock and Truro was created, Thomas James Agar, son of the heiress of Lanhydrock, becoming Lord Robartes in 1869, and succeeding to the Viscountcy of Clifden in 1899.

As is not uncommon in the case of old houses, Lanhydrock stands near to the ancient church, which is a fine building of Perpendicular character, with chancel, nave, aisles, and embattled tower, completely restored in 1888, at the cost of Lady Robartes. The most impressive feature of the mansion externally is the great gate-house with its octagonal turrets and its round archway, which has been referred to. This building is extremely quaint and characteristic, and makes a noble approach to the house itself.

The rebuilding of the mansion was carried out under the direction of Mr. Richard Coad, architect, of London, and was completed in the same style as the work that was destroyed, a considerable addition being made on the south-west, where a small courtyard is enclosed. One point that may be noted in reference to this beautiful house is that the mullioned lights, though not in every part, are filled with plate-glass instead of having the old leaded panes. It is a matter upon which it is unnecessary to express an opinion. Some, no doubt, would prefer to see the light, flooded, perhaps, with crimson or golden glory, falling through latticed panes. There is a Billiard Room, floored and panelled with oak, which has a rich plaster ceiling, and a fine granite mantel-piece, and also a Dining Room panelled with oak, and having a good fireplace. Other apartments are the Library, which

was the old Dining Room, a noble Drawing Room, and the great Long Gallery. The exterior walls are of the local stone, and all the carving of stone and wood was done on the spot. The influence of locality, therefore, rests upon Lanhydrock, both in its design and character, and in the materials and craftsmanship that went to the building of it. Lord Clifden, to further improve his beautiful seat, brought water from a spring in the parish of Lanivet, which is conducted a distance of about two and a-half miles to a reservoir on the hill behind the house. It has been stated that the total cost of rebuilding was some £80,000.

The configuration of the land, which is bold and impressive, adds a great deal to the beauty of Lanhydrock, and there are entrancing prospects from the windows of the house. Its park of about 200 acres is richly varied with wood and pasture. The great avenue planted by the builder, and the magnificent trees which dignify the estate, add immensely to the beauty of the immediate surroundings. A large space in front of the hall has been enclosed with a strong embattled wall, through which the gate-house makes an entrance, and the enclosure is laid out as a terrace-garden. A broad and ample pathway leads up from the barbican gate towards the house, and a round grass-plat lies before the porch, filling, indeed, the quadrangle, with an ornamental tree in the middle. The area of the garden is laid out in a formal arrangement of curved beds, making an elaborate parterre as a jewelled foreground. There is an abundance of garden beauty and much fragrance and colour, but the chiefest charm of Lord Clifden's house is in its own quaint features, its Long Gallery and its panelled chambers, its venerable barbican, its clothing of greenery, and the magnificent trees that form a background for its pleasantly coloured stonework. The beauties of the surrounding country add the final charm to one of the most picturesque houses in Cornwall.