

CHASTLETON HOUSE, OXFORDSHIRE

THIS beautiful Jacobean mansion was built between 1603 and 1614 by one Walter Jones, a substantial woollen merchant of Witney, who purchased the estate from the last of the Catesbys of Chastleton, and whose descent is traced from the old line of Jones of Grismont, county Glamorgan. He married Eleanor Pope, maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth, whose father was Henry Pope, the Queen's jeweller, and her uncle Sir Thomas Pope of Wroxton. It has been stated that Mr. Jones was his own architect, and, if that be so, he designed well and built substantially. Henry Jones succeeded, and was the father of Arthur, a Cavalier, and Henry, a lawyer, who became Chancellor of Bristol, and whose bedroom is still called "the Doctor's chamber." Arthur Jones followed the standard of Charles through the varying fortunes of the war, but, after that monarch's execution, lived quietly at Chastleton until 1651. This Cavalier possessor, however, once more took arms in the cause of Charles's son, and appears to have been with him on the fatal field of Worcester.

Legend or veracious history records his home-coming, and tells how Mistress Jones entertained his pursuers while he sought refuge in a secret chamber, which is still shown. The tired horse in the stable aroused suspicion, and they sought through the house, sounding the floors and walls with pike and musket. Failing, however, to discover the hiding-place, they expressed their intention of supping in the lady's chamber, from which it was approached.

With a trembling hand but an alert mind did Mistress Jones arouse her maids and set about the preparation of the meal, infusing into their wine some drowsy drug that should steal away the Roundheads' brains and rob them of "the pith and marrow of their attribute." Lustily they enjoyed the heavy-headed revel, until, one by one, sleep overcame them all, and when they awoke the bird had flown. A fine was laid on the estate, but it was paid, and has ever since remained with the descendants of the Cavalier. There are memorials of the time in the house. The Bible which Charles presented to Bishop Juxon on the scaffold is in



MANTEL-PIECE IN THE STATE ROOM.

*THE PORCH.*



CHASTLETON HOUSE.

THE DRAWING-ROOM.

Miss Whitmore Jones's possession, as well as many other relics, including a finely-executed miniature of the King on copper, so contrived that transparencies may be placed over it upon which are various pictures representing the different phases of the Monarch's chequered career.

Early in the nineteenth century the estate passed in default of a direct heir to a cousin of the former proprietor, who added the name of Jones to his own patronymic of Whitmore, and lived the life of a country gentleman, maintaining and improving his estate, and ever looking after the welfare of tenant and neighbour.



THE WHITE PARLOUR.

Mr. Whitmore Jones lived until 1853, and all his four sons having died, the estate devolved upon his eldest daughter, the present possessor, who has relinquished it in favour of her nephew who has assumed the name, retaining the house during her lifetime.

Chastleton House is a structure of grey stone, not altered in any material respect. It is quadrangular, with the Dairy Court in the middle, and thus retains the character even of an older period than that in which it was built. Internally the work is very fine, and the Hall has a notable oak screen with two segmental arches between elaborated



THE SCREEN IN THE HALL.



CHASTLETON HOUSE.

THE LONG GALLERY.

columns, and with richly carved entablatures. The panelling is also old and good, the furniture mostly of the period, and there is much ancient armour, some of it belonging to the Civil Wars. The Drawing Room, or Great Chamber, is also very characteristic, with enriched panelling, a splendid armorial mantel-piece, and a plaster ceiling with pendants. The mullioned windows and Chippendale furniture complete a charming interior. The White Parlour, another finely panelled chamber, opens from the Hall, and the Chestnut Parlour is interesting for its pictures and deep cupboards full of old china. The Catesby Room is also attractive,

and there are the Cavalier Chamber, from which the Secret Room is reached, the State Room, which has a finely carved heraldic mantel, and a bold frieze in its moulded plaster, and the Library. Above all, there is the very remarkable Long Gallery, with its impressive panelling, its waggon-headed ornamental ceiling (repaired since the picture was taken), and its air of venerable antiquity—a very remarkable apartment which is at the top of the house, and runs the whole length of the front, as was customary. Chastleton House will cede to few mansions of its kind in the interest of its quaint and beautiful interior.



"THE DOCTOR'S CHAMBER."