

HEWELL GRANGE, WORCESTERSHIRE.

IT suffices to look at these pictures of the beautiful seat of Lord Windsor in the Midlands to recognise the true distinction which rests upon the house. The Italian taste largely pervades it, especially in the vast and noble Hall which fills the middle space, and yet it possesses great variety, or even contrariety, of character. Externally we are in the presence of a mansion of modern construction, but that belongs architecturally to the time of Charles or James, and in some of its elaborate windows appearing to reflect the style of that famous house, the Hall at Bradford-on-Avon. These windows of many lights, these high gables and oriels, and these lofty chimneys, seem to belong to

England entirely; and yet, when we enter the house, we are confronted with splendid work that would be at home in some fine palace of Italy. The house represents the lofty taste of its noble owner, and the skill in architectural design of Mr. Garner.

Before we go any further, it seems desirable, or even essential, to say something concerning the history of Hewell Grange, which is the lineal descendant of a grange of the great Cistercian Abbey of Bordesley, founded by the Empress Maud in 1138. It lies in the parish of Tardebigge or Tarbick, which has the curious distinction that its church lies partly in Warwickshire and partly in Worcestershire. Habington, who was the first collector of



THE GREAT HALL AND ITS GALLERIES.

materials for the history of the latter county, writing in Elizabethan times, refers to this singular fact. He says that he had stretched out his chain to the uttermost length, but that it could not reach to the chancel of the church, that being in Warwickshire. Yet he could not but behold the magnificent tombs which that chancel held, and first, he quaintly says, "I sawe the streame of Nature turned for Love, which vsually discendethe from parents to theyre children heere ascendethe with grace to the father and

grandmother in the noble monuments of the Lords Windsors."

The Windsors, descended from Walter, a castellan of the Royal fortress of Windsor, came to Warwickshire through an enforced exchange. Henry VIII. had set his mind upon possessing their ancestral home at Stanwell in Middlesex, and they had no choice but to fall in with the Royal wish. Sir Andrews Windsor had been raised to the peerage as Lord Windsor in 1529, and the second lord, after being one of the twenty-six peers who



THE SOUTH END OF THE GREAT HALL.



THE SOUTH-WEST GALLERY.

signed the settlement of the crown upon Lady Jane Grey, suddenly became active in the proclamation of Queen Mary. He built the manor house of Bradenham in Buckinghamshire, which was another seat of the Windsors, and there his son entertained the Queen in 1566, but shortly afterwards Hewell became the principal residence of the family. On the death of the sixth lord, the barony fell into abeyance, but was called out in favour of

his nephew, Thomas Windsor Hickman, a valiant Cavalier, afterwards created Earl of Plymouth.

The second Earl was the builder of the old mansion at Hewell, a vast classic structure, which has been dismantled within recent years, the house which we illustrate having replaced it. It was a massive square building with a fine Greek portico and pediment, and a balustrade round the top, great and imposing, and



SOUTH SIDE OF THE GREAT HALL.

having frontages varying in length from 100ft. to 127ft. Built in 1712, it was improved and completed by the fourth Earl of Plymouth about 1758. The earldom died out in 1843, but the barony of Windsor, falling into abeyance between the sisters of the last Earl, was restored in favour of Lady Harriett Clive in 1855, whose grandson is the present Lord Windsor.

The house had fallen into some disrepair, and, in its formal classic character, had ceased to satisfy its possessor. Accordingly Lord

Windsor erected on an adjacent site the existing house in the Jacobean style, between the years 1884 and 1892. To build a house to one's mind, and to lay out the grounds which are its final beauty, is a pleasure of a high and inspiring order, and Lord Windsor and his architect went to work well, and triumphantly succeeded.

We shall now indicate something of the character of the interior. Let it be said at once that the rooms are numerous and varied in their features. Some are richly panelled in oak, with



THE GRAND STAIRWAY.

fine mantels and fireplaces. The taste passes from the Jacobean to the Georgian; beautiful plaster-work in some rooms contrasts with carved oak in others, and marble mantels, enriched and beautified, present a contrast to the older character found in much of the oak work. The same variety is found in the furnishing and plenishing of the house, for there are chairs that might be at home in ancient Tudor houses, and cabinets that seem to belong to the time

of Louis XVI. Let us most fully approve this eclecticism of taste, for in creating a modern house we may well ransack various ages for all things that are suitable, and there is certainly the harmony of variety in Lord Windsor's spacious abode.

Amid a great deal that is beautiful and that might delay the pen, the vast and impressive Hall is the most notable feature of the interior. Many great houses of the style in which Lord



THE PIERCED BALUSTRADES OF THE GRAND STAIRWAY.

Windsor's new structure is mainly cast are built about courtyards, and the quadrangular plan has many merits, but it sometimes presents the grave disadvantage that it allows no place for corridors, and that a whole series of rooms may be in intercommunication to serve as a passage-way. Lord Windsor's house was planned differently. His Great Hall has all the advantages of a courtyard. It is large and lofty, in every way spacious and airy, and is well adapted to act as the "lungs" of the house, and to be the means of communication between the various parts of it. It has its pleasant recesses, its fine fireplace, its opening to the garden vestibule, its noble staircase and splendid upper corridors, all arcaded and beautiful. There is nothing here of the customary square enclosure to form a hall or room, but a sense of largeness and nobility, with glimpses of the upper spaces and corridors, and a peculiarly happy triple arrangement within the Great Hall itself, all showing bold imagination and individualised treatment. Entering from the garden vestibule, which is separated from the Hall by three round arches, rising upon Corinthian columns, we have the whole extent before us. To the



A BEAUTIFUL MANTEL-PIECE.

left is the lofty arch, flanked by pillared openings, through which the foot of the great staircase is reached. Above run the magnificent gallery corridors, partly open and partly concealed, which bridge the recesses opposite. On our right hand is the third division of the Hall, used as a Billiard Room, and entered through the middle arch of three, the other openings having beautiful marble balustrades.

The ruling idea in the designing of this great and imposing Hall was majesty in character and richness in materials and handicraft. Marbles and travertine, the products of the most celebrated quarries, splendid woodwork, and the best that the craftsman in plaster could accomplish—nothing was spared that could beautify the interior. How admirable is the effect the pictures disclose, and perhaps none of them so well as that of the south side. Here we see the nobility of the opening arcade in the foreground, with its marble balustrade, the lovely polished shafts of precious marble rising to Corinthian capitals and supporting most elegant arches, whose spandrels are filled with inlaid marble, and above these the enriched moulding of the splendid ceiling. On the left the arches of the garden



THE SMALL DINING-ROOM.

vestibule are disclosed, like in character, but even more enriched in details, and equally beautiful in the glory of the marble that has been introduced. Next we notice the pillars and arches at the other end of the Hall, opening to the staircase and the rooms on that side of the house. Here variety is introduced into the design, and nothing in the Hall is more beautiful than the splendid arcading of the Gallery Room above, which is glorious in its marbles and exceedingly beautiful in its plaster adornments. The Gallery Corridor is perhaps the most original feature in this very remarkable chamber, and the noble staircase, with its richly-carved newel-posts and hand-rail and its grand panelling, is a worthy approach to it. The extraordinary elaboration and beauty of the upper work is seen to advantage in some of the pictures, and the splendour of the detail will be observed. Particularly noteworthy is the arcading on the upper level, supported by quadruple Corinthian

shafts of marble. The ceilings are also of admirable design, and are much varied.

The Hall itself has a magnificent ceiling of oak, framed between the tie-beams, and supported by grand brackets on the walls. The arrangement of the principal and secondary ribs is bold, and they are richly moulded and adorned with carved bosses at the intersections. Excellent, again, is the wainscot below, plain, and good in colour, forming a suitable background for the portrait busts and old furniture. Here it may be mentioned that Hewell Grange is possessed of many fine family portraits and pictures brought from the older house, in which hung good examples of Rubens, Snyders, and other masters. It remains to be said of this splendid and almost unique apartment that the illumination is excellent. Electric glow-lamps diffuse a pleasant light which is without deep shadows, and reproduces some thing of the effect of day.



THE GARDEN VESTIBULE.