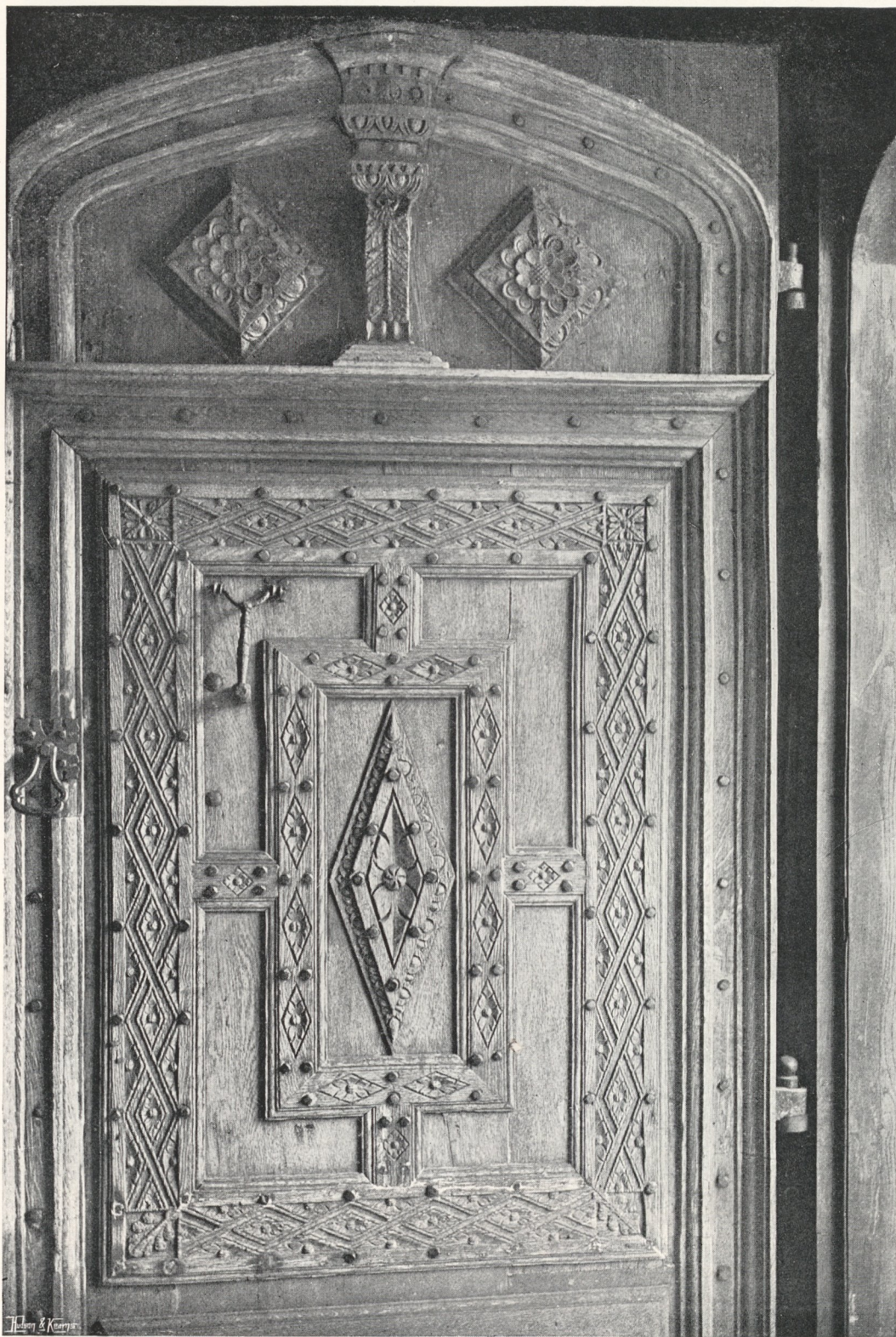


WAKEHURST PLACE, SUSSEX.

TO those lovers of the beautiful who admire harmony of detail and perfect ornateness in a home, both outside and in, Wakehurst Place appeals irresistibly from the moment of passing the old grey stone cottage, with its roof also of stone, which serves as a substitute, grateful to the eye, for the usual

modern "lodge." It is this very colouring of soft greyness, touched in by Time itself, that lends such a charm to this Sussex stone-built manor house, set in a surrounding of lovely woods, with rhododendrons growing freely amidst natural rocks, and the deeper foliage of evergreen oaks that date back to the earliest days of Wakehurst.

From very early chronicles one learns that in 1412 John Wakehurst, of ancient lineage, had "lands and tenements with appurtenances at Wakehurst," in the parish and lordship of Ardingly, upon the forest ridge of the Weald, six miles north-east of Hayward's Heath and thirty-six miles south of London. It was not, however, until 1590 that Sir Edward Culpeper, then owner of Wakehurst, built the house, choosing for its site the highest part of the land, and constructing one of the most stately and ornamental mansions of the Elizabethan period, with the distinction of being one of the few of that type that are to be found on a hill. His initials, E. C., are carved in the stone of the entrance. A century later Sir William Culpeper, fourth and last baronet, sold the manor and its acres, numbering 1,500, to Dennis Liddell, Comptroller of the Treasurer's Accounts of the Navy under William III., and later it passed through several hands to Mr. J. Peyton, who in his turn sold it to the Dowager Marchioness of Downshire, from whom it was bought by the present owner, Sir William Boord, Bart. Wakehurst has been thoroughly restored by Sir



THE CARVED OAK DOORWAY.

William Boord, under the direction of Mr. Aston Webb, R.A.

On approaching the house from the pleasaunce, or old English garden, one is struck

now forms a uniquely charming Drawing Room, with its beautiful original ceiling preserved in all its pristine glory. The frieze surrounding the ceiling has the Culpeper badge—a quaint mer-



THE HALL AND STAIRCASE.

by the exceeding beauty of its gables, many of them adorned with pinnacles, surmounted by stone balls with copper spikes projecting, so that they look like bursting grenades.

The old Hall, which led from the entrance,

maiden—as part of its pattern. The walls are panelled with antique tapestry in perfect condition; the lovely furniture is old Italian, and the overmantel was designed to accord with the old carved wood supports to the mantel-piece. In



THE DRAWING-ROOM.

*THE LIBRARY.*

this room, as in the Library and Boudoir, are innumerable curiosities, many of them rare, and all interesting, some being heirlooms, others collected by Sir William and Lady Boord, whose taste for such things is as true as is the sense of fitness which displays itself in the harmonising with their beautiful house of all its additions and adjuncts.

The rooms that project squarely on either side of the recessed Drawing Room are the Boudoir and the Dining Room. Here, again, we find the original decoration in the oak panelling of the walls, the grain and polish of the wood being perfect and beautiful, and the Culpeper badge appearing in the surmounting frieze. The ceiling has beams cross-wise, each square now lighted by electric lamps, the installation of electricity having been made when the restoration of the house gave opportunity for it. Two monks carved in wood support the mantel-piece; the sideboard is in character with the oak panelling, and the carved chairs, with their leather seats, add to the ancient and reposeful atmosphere of the room.

The Boudoir was painted throughout by a Japanese artist, the curiosities here being chiefly from Japan. The artist had been sent by the Mikado to study European art, with a view to becoming an instructor under Government on his return, and had just gone through a course of oil-painting in Paris. His dado of flowers and foliage, birds, fish, squirrels, and insects, shows all the skill and careful detail of the Japanese style, added to the broader effect learnt in his foreign studies. From the ceiling depends a lamp brought from a temple, the bells dangling from it having been replaced by little twisted globes of electric light. The mantel-piece is adorned by a golden image of Buddha in the most complacent of his seven moods, which formerly dwelt in a Japanese shrine; and, indeed, on every side of this interesting room one finds new, or rather old, objects to admire. A quaint railing partitions off a dais in the recess of the window, this being modelled on a pattern to be found in an old house in Nuremberg.

In the east wing, where formerly were situated the brew and bake houses and offices, is now the Library, contemporaneous, as is also the white stone chimney-piece, with the structure. On the stone shields above the hearth are the coats of arms and crests denoting the intermarriages of Wakehurst possessors. Here are more gatherings from foreign lands and many books, both old and new. Beyond this, again,

is Sir William Boord's own Sitting Room, with the evidences of some of his leisure employments in the photographic apparatus and the three lathes and tool chests, a table near holding specimens of his craft, amongst them a set of chessmen finely turned. And, further on, is a cosy "gun-room," shared by the sons of the house, wherein are many signs and symbols of the sports in which they are proficient.

The Chapel built by Lady Downshire during her term of ownership adjoins the Library, and has some fine oak panels in it, and a piece of handsome tapestry, brought from some foreign church. Two life-size carved angels bend with extended wings over pews, and the atmosphere of this little devotional retreat is one of peace and calm, shut off from the outer world, as it is, by a heavy oaken door.

A singular feature of the house is the carved surmount to the old oak staircase, which has a very ornamental and quite unusual character. Upstairs are numerous bedrooms, all combining comfort with decorativeness, the carved bedsteads and other furniture being chosen in strict accordance with the date of the house. In the one known as the Peacock Room is a trap-door, through which, and by a hidden shaft in the wall, fugitives might escape down to the porch, whence an underground passage led beneath the lawn and park beyond to a safe coign of vantage, where, amidst sheltering trees and rocks, freedom and safety could be gained. On the floor above, again, are bedrooms, all unusual in shape, with slanting roofs and splendid old beams, some of the largest comprising two or three of the original bedrooms, one of which, known as the Eagle's Nest, commands a beautiful view of the country round.

Wandering past the stables, which date from the end of the seventeenth century, and originally joined the farm buildings—for in those times the coach of my lord and my lady was drawn by the same horses that ploughed, and pulled the waggons—one finds one's way through the gardens to the old bowling green, marked out by very ancient and beautiful yew trees, which has been restored to its former smooth trimly-kept greenness.

Then comes the lake, beyond which is the rock garden, designed by Lady Boord herself, and carried out under her personal direction. One of her hobbies is horticulture, her efficiency in which is shown by the careful supervision she bestows on every portion of the garden, so that one may say she is her own head-gardener.