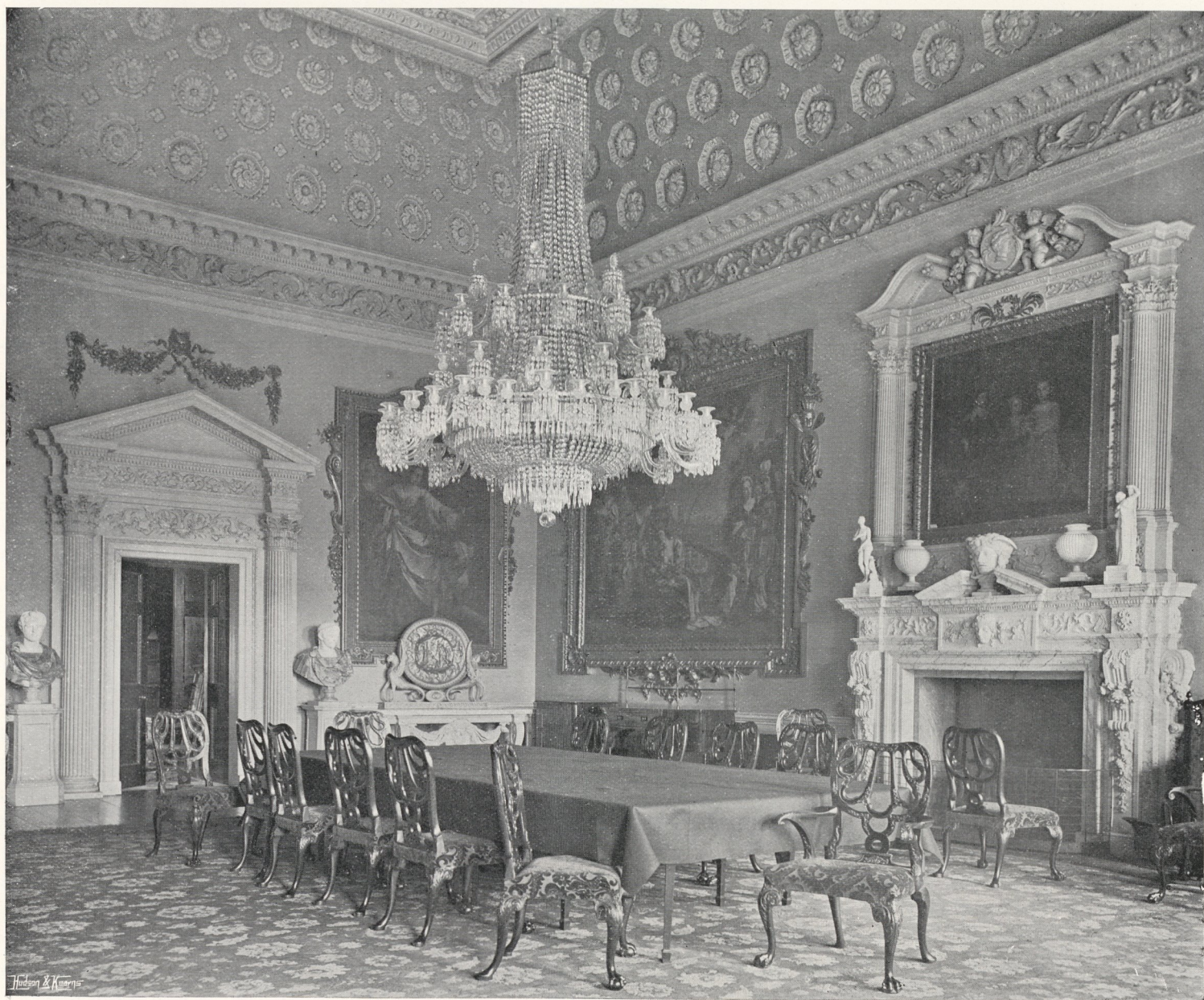


STOURHEAD, WILTSHIRE.

THE beautiful estate of Stourhead—made beautiful by the family into whose possession it came—was purchased by Mr. Henry Hoare, who, in 1720, erected on the site of an older house a fine classic mansion, designed by the well-known architect Colin Campbell, in whose "Vitruvius Britannicus" it is illustrated. Here, in former times, the baronial house of Stourton had been seated, deriving their name from the manor, which was so designated from the river Stour, whose sources are six springs in the valley within the park. Mr. Henry Hoare built in the Italian style, in stone of a warm tint, which assumed a pleasing hue, and a Corinthian portico with a pediment was added by Sir Hugh Hoare, the third baronet. The mansion formed

at first a square, 70ft. by 77ft., but the additions to it, including the two wings erected in 1800 by Sir Richard Colt Hoare, the well-known antiquary and historian, extended the front to 200ft.

Henry Hoare, the first possessor of his family to live at Stourhead, bequeathed the place to his son Henry, whose daughter Anne married her first cousin Richard, son of Sir Richard Hoare, Lord Mayor of London, and to their son Richard Hoare it passed from his grandfather by deed of gift, together with the rest of the landed property in the three counties of Wilts, Somerset, and Dorset, on the borders of which Stourhead stands. This Richard was raised to the baronetage in 1786, and his son was the County Historian,



THE SALOON.

whose volumes throw so much light upon local history. It was, indeed, in order to make room for his large collection of paintings and extensive library that Sir Richard Colt Hoare erected the two wings of the house, one being the Library and the other the Picture Gallery. From this possessor the estate passed to his nephew Hugh, and passing again to a brother's son, became the property of Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare, from whom

crest of the Hoare family. The Hall was a great apartment, a cube of 30ft., well furnished with many family portraits upon its walls. These included Sir Richard Hoare, Henry, his son, the purchaser of Stourton, represented with a plan of his contemplated mansion, the new Stourhead, in his right hand, Sir Richard Hoare, Lord Mayor of London, and a great many others.



THE HALL.

the present Sir Henry Hoare, a cousin, inherited it in 1894.

Entered through an embattled gate-house, with towers at either side, the drive of the great house swept upwards to the portico. The house was approached by two flights of steps adorned at the foot by large basins, on the rims of which sculptured eagles were perched bending over in the attitude of drinking, this being the

From the left of the Hall the visitor entered the Music Room, 30ft. by 20ft., where was an organ built into the wall facing the fireplace, with its fine carved chimney-piece, above which hung a panel by Panini of St. Peter's at Rome. Other pictures were by Calcott, R.A., Owen, R.A., R. Thompson, R.A., T. Daniell, R.A., and there were works by Veronese, Teniers, and Gainsborough. Some particularly noble pictures delighted the visitor to the splendid house which had thus been adorned. The Library was divided from the Music Room by a small gallery, and was itself a magnificent chamber, 45ft. by 25ft., its southern end decorated with a lunette whose window represented groups from Raphael's "School at Athens," while the opposite compartment was filled with a painting after Raphael representing "Apollo and the Muses on Parnassus," and the figures of "Fortitude" and "Temperance" by Woodforde. Over the doors oval niches held busts by Rysbrach of the old and the young Milton. The inlaid mantelpiece, with its Ionic columns, added much to the charms of the room, and above it hung a picture representing "A Sacrifice to Minerva," by Angelica Kauffmann, including a figure of Frances, Lady Hoare, whose friend

Angelica was. Among the pictures was a portrait of Sir Henry Ainslie Hoare, by Prescott Knight, "A Storm at Sea," by Vernet, and "A Boy's Head," of the Spanish school. The simplicity of the interior, with its coved ceiling and its mural paintings by Angelica Kauffmann filling the lunette, and the busts of Milton below, give character to the apartment.



THE PAINTED OR ITALIAN ROOM.

The Dining Room had also a notable mantelpiece, and hunting and other pictures. In the south apartments hung a large collection of

Ludovico Cardi, Carlo Maratti, Raphael Mengs, Poussin, Memling, Andrea del Sarto, Correggio, and many artists scarcely less famous. The



THE PICTURE GALLERY.

Alken's sporting prints, many of the pictures having been removed to the Picture Gallery. Among the artists represented in the great collection were Guido Reni, Zuccarelli, Guercino,

illustration of the Picture Gallery will indicate the noble character of this great collection.

A catalogue of pictures is not, however, necessary in this place. It is the purpose rather



THE SMALL DINING-ROOM.

to draw attention to the architectural and decorative character of the interior. The picture of the Saloon shows the delicate character and admirable artistic effect of the marble mantel with the fluted Corinthian columns over it, supporting a pediment with cherubs holding a head of one of the Cæsars, and enframing a remarkable picture. Then again the door framing of fluted columns with an enriched architrave and pediment suggests the classic character of the mansion, while the coved ceiling and the magnificent lustre are indicative of the sumptuousness of the adornment. The Painted or Italian Room was entirely decorated by Italian artists for Sir Richard Colt Hoare, whose favourite sitting-room it was, and one of the illustrations will show how very admirable was the effect. It will be seen that the same classic character and perfection of handicraft

dignified and enriched the Dining Room, and the whole house was in the same beautiful style.

It must now be said that a sad change passed over the famous house of Stourhead. It was visited by that dire infliction which has robbed us of so many things that were precious. A large part of the house suffered from fire, and much was destroyed, but the Library and Picture Gallery, being in the wings, were saved. A large part of the valuable collection of pictures was also rescued, with many other things that are to adorn the restored structure. This disaster was peculiarly lamentable, because Stourhead represented a very fine type of the classic houses of England, built and adorned by those whose taste and judgment had caused them to enrich and embellish it with many magnificent treasures of art in its manifold forms.