

HOLME LACY, HEREFORD.

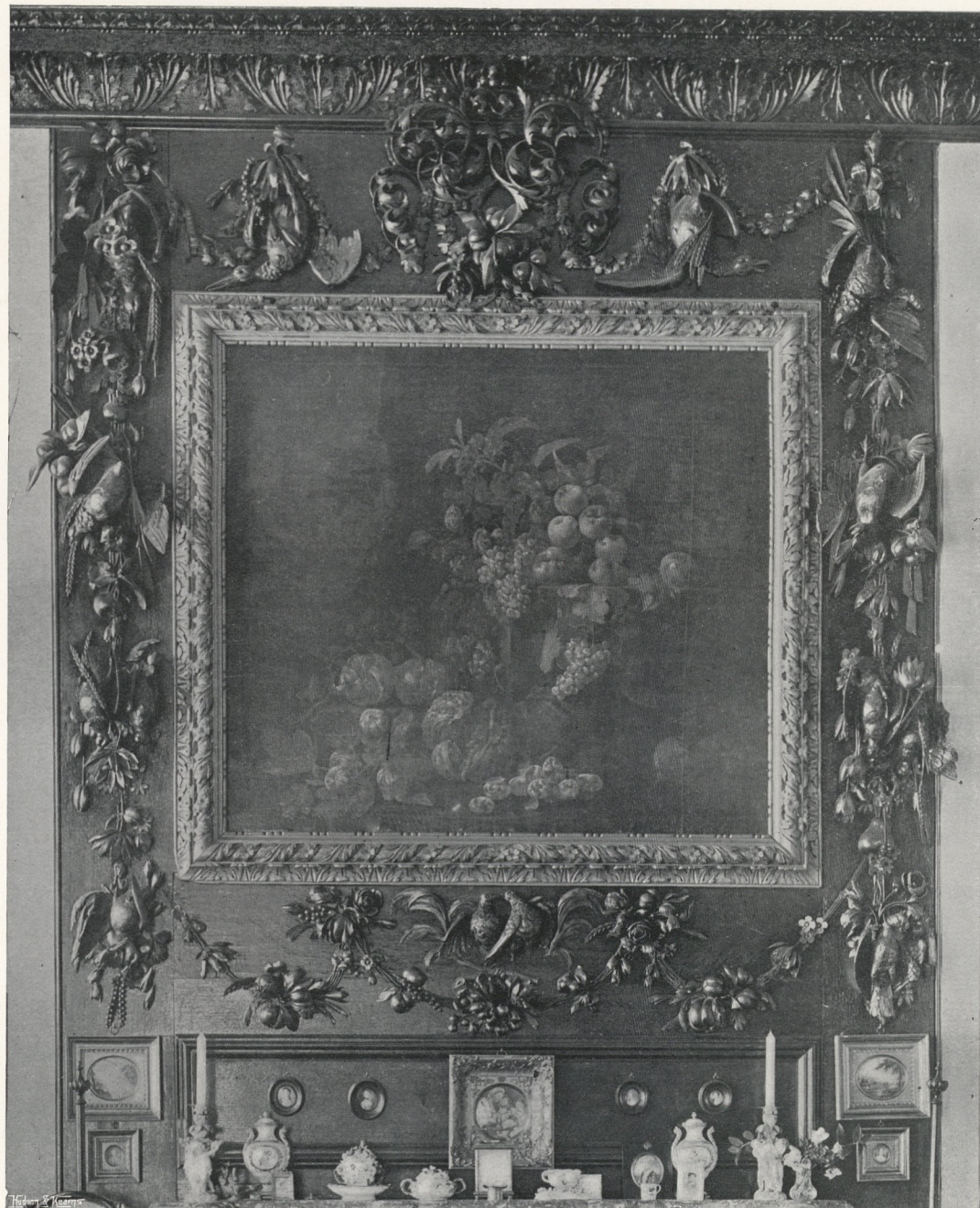
LORD CHESTERFIELD'S historic house was for centuries the country seat of the Scudamores, of which ancient family Sir Edwyn Scudamore Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield's grandfather, was the senior co-heir. Few noble families can boast of having dwelt on the same estate from the reign of Edward III. ; but the Scudamores actually came into the country with the Conqueror, and originally settled at Unton and Norton in Wiltshire, Holme Lacy coming into the family through the marriage of a younger son of Sir Peter Scudamore with a daughter of the house of Lacy, to whom the place originally belonged,

and from whom it took its distinctive suffix. Holme Lacy is finely seated in a lovely part of Herefordshire, amid some of the most beautiful scenery in Western England.

The mansion was built late in the reign of Henry VIII., as is curiously proved by the quaint badges of Edward VI. when Prince of Wales, and the initials "E.P." emblazoned on the painted glass, which is a feature of the mansion. It must have been very shortly after the first building of Holme Lacy that the place was possessed by Sir James Scudamore, the father of the first Viscount Scudamore. This nobleman, raised to the peerage by Charles I., played a considerable

part in the history of his day, and was the intimate friend of the Duke of Buckingham, after whose death he relinquished his official employments, and retired to Holme Lacy for a short period, during which time he laboured hard on the improvement of his apple orchards. In 1634 he was called from his retirement and made Ambassador to France, and some very interesting mementoes of this embassy are at Holme Lacy, notwithstanding that he took the part of the King in the Civil Wars, and that his estates underwent temporary sequestration.

This peer's grandson, the second Viscount Scudamore, in great measure rebuilt Holme Lacy. He was the last Viscount of his line, and ancestor of the present Lord Chesterfield. A little later, by direct descent, the wife of the eleventh Duke of Norfolk was in possession, and for a time, at the beginning of the last century, Holme Lacy was frequently inhabited by the Duke and Duchess. The Duchess left no children, and in 1820 Holme Lacy passed into the



GIBBONS CARVING IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.



THE DRAWING-ROOM.

possession of Sir Edwyn Stanhope, who prefixed the name of Scudamore to his own.

Holme Lacy is approached by a splendid terrace 700ft. long, and the Entrance Hall opens upon a gallery 90ft. in length, lighted by five windows of stained glass, emblazoned with the arms of Bridges, Stanhope, and Scudamore. No modern furniture has been allowed to mar the stately beauty of the Gallery, there being only some fine eighteenth century chairs and a few good pictures. At the end folding

doors open to the broad staircase, which is lighted by another large painted window, while on the left side are doors leading into the principal apartments, notably the Saloon, a really splendid room, containing some very fine specimens of work by Grinling Gibbons. The ceiling is very lofty, deeply coffered, and beautified with pendent festoons of fruit and flowers in admirable moulded plaster-work. Here hang many fine family portraits, including a very

curious painting of Sir James Scudamore, equipped as for a tournament; also a quaint and valuable "Solomon and the Queen of Sheba," which was so highly thought of by the Duke of Norfolk that it was copied in stained glass for a window to be placed in Arundel Castle.

The Ante Room, which opens from the Saloon, and beyond which is the Dining Room, is a peculiarly delightful apartment, containing some splendid Elizabethan portraits in magnificent

frames and a very beautiful carved oak frieze. In the Dining Room, of which the moulded ceiling and the masterfully-carved embellishments of the mantel-piece are specially worthy of notice, are several valuable family portraits by Van Dyck and Sir Peter Lely. Each of the splendid rooms is adorned with fine paintings, and, what is perhaps rarer, with exquisite specimens of Grinling Gibbons' work in marvellous craftsmanship never excelled. At Holme Lacy the great artist must have spent many



THE LIBRARY.

months in carving birds, fruit, and marvellous flowers, as naturally as if just plucked from the stem.

In the Library, which contains two seven-

Drawing Room. If we are asked to say what are the distinguishing merits of the interior of Holme Lacy, we cannot but reply that these are found in its wonderful collection of pictures,



THE LONG CORRIDOR.

teenth century portraits of considerable historic value, the master craftsman seems to have surpassed himself, and there is more of the same fine work in the beautiful and comfortable

its superb wood-carvings, and its admirable plaster-work.

The pictures scattered through the house are all worthy of special notice. In addition to those



THE ANTE ROOM.

already mentioned as of particular interest are portraits of Louis XIII. and of his Queen, presented to the then Lord Scudamore at the time of his embassy to France, and a copy of Van Dyck's head of the famous Lord Strafford, done by Pope

Lacy, quite as full of attraction as the house itself. The old gardens on the south side of the house were formed on the model of Hampton Court, the yew trees, disposed in straight lines, having been originally clipped into grotesque shapes.



THE SALOON.

during one of his many sojourns at Holme Lacy, which has the added value of being, it is believed, with the exception of a portrait in oils of Betterton, the actor, the only proof remaining of the poet's talent as a painter.

There are very beautiful gardens at Holme

The last Lady Scudamore delighted in gathering about her the wits and *littérateurs* of the day, and, in addition to Pope and Gay, many other men of letters were warmly made welcome at Holme Lacy; indeed, it was actually there that Pope became acquainted with John Kyrle, who is



THE DINING-ROOM.

said to have sat, all unwittingly, for "The Man of Ross."

Lord Chesterfield's predecessors have played a great part in the history of their country. Long before Sir Philip Stanhope, Baron Stanhope, was made Earl of Chesterfield in 1628 by Charles I., the Stanhope family had been famed for special qualities of statesmanship and exceptional valour. The first Earl proved himself one of his King's most devoted supporters; his son lost his life in defending one of the Royalist towns, and he himself did not live to see the Restoration. Philip, the second Earl of Chesterfield, succeeded his grandfather. He was educated abroad, but, after the Restoration, held several Court appointments, and was finally succeeded by Philip, the third Earl, who became, in his turn, the father of Philip Dormer Stanhope, the fourth and most famous Lord Chesterfield, who, equally as diplomatist, statesman, and man of

letters, may claim to have been one of the glories of the eighteenth century, "a nobleman unequalled in his time for variety of talents, brilliancy of wit, politeness and elegance of conversation . . . these were his excellences; let those who surpass them speak of his defects." He, of course, was the author of the famous "Letters to his Son," which, first appearing in 1774, have taken their place among English classics. After his death the title passed to a distant cousin, descended from a younger son of the first Lord Chesterfield. This fifth Earl was succeeded by his son, the sixth Earl, who held the title forty-one years, and was succeeded in turn by his son, the seventh Earl. The latter died unmarried in 1871, and the title devolved upon his cousin, Mr. George Philip Stanhope, who died in 1883, and was in his turn succeeded by a cousin, the father of the present peer.



CARVINGS IN THE LIBRARY.