

INTRODUCTION.

MORE than sixty years have elapsed since the publication of that renowned book, Nash's "Mansions of England in the Olden Time." It was a book that made an instant appeal to the age in which it appeared, for the ground had been prepared by the intellectual movement which, towards the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of its successor, had turned the thoughts of many with eager curiosity to the past. Romantic literature in that age, and even earlier, had stirred the general mind to a revolt against the chilling spirit of a classic convention and the decayed forms of a soulless art. The voice of Shakespeare was not silent, however.

It aroused to passionate utterance the young Goethe, in rebellion against the artificial, in his "Goetz von Berlichingen"; it became the inspiration of Scott; and it awoke new fire in the glowing pages of Byron. The world at large was moved, and men's minds became absorbed with intense interest in every manifestation of Mediæval and Tudor art. The plaster wonders of Strawberry Hill had been but an early prelude to much that was curiously absurd in a slavish but imperfect imitation of earlier times, but there came later on a riper knowledge, and the laborious genius of Pugin and his associates re-created the architecture and the arts of earlier days. What was best in this



NORTON CONYERS: THE HALL AND STAIRCASE.