



THE HALL CHAMBER.

from Italy, endeavoured to induce Mr. Philip Packer to rebuild Groombridge upon classic models; but if that be the case, he seems, fortunately, not to have succeeded, for there is very little that is purely classic in the house except the loggia porch. Mr. Packer was buried in Groombridge Chapel, and was followed in possession by his son John and his grandson Philip. Upon the death of the latter unmarried, the estate passed to his sisters as co-heiresses, and was purchased out of the Court of Chancery by Mr. William Camfield, who in 1792 sold it to Mr. Robert Burgess of Hall Place, in the county of Kent. In due course it came to his nephew, the Reverend John J. Saint, and to the Misses Saint, who are its present possessors.

The house which Mr. Packer built appears to have changed comparatively little since his time. Its internal features are good and simple, and present that domestic aspect which should be found in all houses that do not partake of the character of palaces. The hall-chamber is panelled with oak, having a design distempered upon it, and contains an old carved buffet, and excellent Jacobean and Chippendale chairs. There is no intrusion of the twentieth century here. The lighting is by candles, and a chandelier hangs by a chain from the ceiling. The

dining-hall bears the same character, and has all those delights and comforts which belong to ancient oak, invested with the warm hues of time, and reflecting from the dull polish of its surface the bright sunlight through the window or the flames of the log fire on the hearth. A Jacobean mantel, with enriched piers and elaborate panelling, rises almost to the ceiling, and the fireplace below has an arch quite in the Tudor character. The wainscot also rises to the ceiling, and forms a suitable background for the old family portraits that hang upon it. An ancient table, thick-legged and sturdy, with foot-rails in the olden fashion, a richly-carved sideboard cabinet, and Chippendale or Sheraton chairs, sconces upon the walls, and the crystal chandelier, add to the harmonies of a charming interior.

There are lighter features in the drawing-room, where the work is of more recent date. Let it be noticed how the panelling of this charming apartment, which may belong to the time of the Stuarts, differs from the more ancient panelling of the dining-hall. The ceiling is moulded in harmony with this later style, and is peculiarly enriched in its plaster-work, which represents fruit and foliage. There are grand old mirrors in the room, Chippendale chairs, others of older type, portraits of the