

AUDLEY END, ESSEX.

THE great seat of Lord Braybrooke was, in the splendour of its early prime, accounted amongst the most princely of all the houses of England. James I., in his fine sarcastic vein, said that it was "too much for a King, though it might do very well for a Lord Treasurer." Lord Chancellor Audley, who, as old Fuller says, "carved for himself, in the feast of abbey lands, the first cut, and that a dainty morsel"—the magnificent priory of the Holy Trinity in Aldgate—had, as his chief share in the monastic spoil, the broad possessions of the rich abbey of Walden in Essex. It is not certain that he ever lived there. His daughter married the fourth

Duke of Norfolk, whose son Thomas Howard, one of the captains against the Armada, was raised to the peerage as Lord Howard de Walden by Elizabeth, and advanced to the earldom of Suffolk by James I. He it was who built Audley End, beginning it in 1603 and completing it in 1616. The famous John Thorpe was his architect, and Evelyn described the wondrous fabric as "one of the stateliest palaces in the kingdom, 'twixt antiq. and modern; it shows without like a diadem by the decorations of the cupolas and other ornaments on the pavilions." The original plan included two quadrangles and a great gateway, flanked by imposing towers, in the admirable style



THE HALL AS SEEN FROM THE STAIRWAY.