

LONGLEAT, WILTSHIRE.

WHETHER Sir John Thynne, the Shropshire squire, knighted after the battle of Pinkie, 1547, afterwards secretary to the Protector Somerset, and the possessor of vast wealth in a time when much wealth ran in new channels, was veritably in his own person that mysterious architect John of Padua, as some have ventured to suggest, or whether he confided the erection of his famous dwelling to some other great master, or shared in the planning and designing, as is more probable, it is universally admitted that the house he built at Longleat is one of the most magnificent of all English ancient homes, comparable even to such places as Hatfield and

Audley End. Much might be said of its history, but the purpose here is mainly to note its internal features, and to endeavour to observe how Architecture, calling in Sculpture as a hand-maid, has singularly beautified it, and how the woodcarver, glass-stainer, tapestry-worker, and others carried on the house to completion, with rare, harmonious, and satisfactory charm. The erectors of Longleat were, indeed, many of them remarkable men. The original builder, Sir John Thynne, who secured possession of the lands of the old Black Augustinian Canons of Longleat, expended enormous sums during a period of years. His first structure suffered from fire, but beginning his work afresh about 1568, he is said to have been helped by Robert Smithson, the builder of Wollaton, and when he died in 1580 he left a large part of it completed, though much of it as an architectural shell merely, and no portion of the west front had been erected. The magnificent oak screen and wainscot were added by his son, Sir John Thynne. Sir James, the fourth owner, who died in 1670, erected the great staircase, and laid out the stone terrace under the advice of Sir Christopher Wren, and at the same time the old priory barn was converted into stabling. Thynne was visited at Longleat by Charles II. and his Queen in 1663, and great rejoicings took place. He was succeeded by his nephew Thomas, better known as "Tom of Ten Thousand," the "Issachar" of "Absolom and Achitophel," who was foully done to death in Pall Mall by the secret agents of Count Königsmark on February 12th, 1682. It is known that this possessor did much to beautify the place, completing a fine



MARBLE CHIMNEY-PIECE IN THE SALOON.