

LITTLECOTE, WILTSHIRE.

THE famous house of Littlecote—the ancient home of the Darells and the Pophams—stands within the Wiltshire border, but at a distance of some three or four miles only from Hungerford in Berkshire. Leland, who saw it on his historic journeying, describes its grounds as “a right faire and large parke hangynge upon the clyffe of a highe hille welle woddyd over Kenet.” The description is true to-day, for the Kennet still flows through the park, and the woods there still are green. When the Antiquary visited it the house must have been new, but, though many changes have passed over it, the structure preserves unaltered the aspect of his times. About it have gathered traditions as tragic, strange, and romantic as linger around the time-worn walls of any house in England. The situation is low, and the land

by the house level, but higher to the south, so that as the visitor nears it, approaching by the old avenue, he sees the red-brick walls and gables and chimney-stacks rising above the hedges and garden adornments. Truly a house of marvellous charm is this, and many-featured in its antique character, since some forty gables are lifted against the sky in a grouping of old-world picturesqueness. It is a feast of colour also, rich and glowing when seen in the setting sun, with the dark green foreground and the sky behind, and countless panes in its mullioned windows to reflect the evening glow. There is a masterful grouping of wall-spaces, and the play of light and shade on the bold projections and sheltered recesses, upon buttress and oriel, and upon gable and chimney, which is not the least charm of the structure. The alterations made



THE HOUSE AND FORECOURT.