

CHASTLETON HOUSE, OXFORDSHIRE

THIS beautiful Jacobean mansion was built between 1603 and 1614 by one Walter Jones, a substantial woollen merchant of Witney, who purchased the estate from the last of the Catesbys of Chastleton, and whose descent is traced from the old line of Jones of Grismont, county Glamorgan. He married Eleanor Pope, maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth, whose father was Henry Pope, the Queen's jeweller, and her uncle Sir Thomas Pope of Wroxton. It has been stated that Mr. Jones was his own architect, and, if that be so, he designed well and built substantially. Henry Jones succeeded, and was the father of Arthur, a Cavalier, and Henry, a lawyer, who became Chancellor of Bristol, and whose bedroom is still called "the Doctor's chamber." Arthur Jones followed the standard of Charles through the varying fortunes of the war, but, after that monarch's execution, lived quietly at Chastleton until 1651. This Cavalier possessor, however, once more took arms in the cause of Charles's son, and appears to have been with him on the fatal field of Worcester.

Legend or veracious history records his home-coming, and tells how Mistress Jones entertained his pursuers while he sought refuge in a secret chamber, which is still shown. The tired horse in the stable aroused suspicion, and they sought through the house, sounding the floors and walls with pike and musket. Failing, however, to discover the hiding-place, they expressed their intention of supping in the lady's chamber, from which it was approached.

With a trembling hand but an alert mind did Mistress Jones arouse her maids and set about the preparation of the meal, infusing into their wine some drowsy drug that should steal away the Roundheads' brains and rob them of "the pith and marrow of their attribute." Lustily they enjoyed the heavy-headed revel, until, one by one, sleep overcame them all, and when they awoke the bird had flown. A fine was laid on the estate, but it was paid, and has ever since remained with the descendants of the Cavalier. There are memorials of the time in the house. The Bible which Charles presented to Bishop Juxon on the scaffold is in



MANTEL-PIECE IN THE STATE ROOM.