

BRAMALL HALL, CHESHIRE.

THE ancient seat of the Davenports, after passing, some years ago, through a critical period in its long history, has now fallen upon good and seemly days. The line of its old possessors is no longer represented there, but, in the hands of Mr. Nevill, who purchased it, it is safe from some dangers that threatened it, and is maintained with judicious care and with a true love for its great and beautiful features. It certainly ranks among the most interesting of the old half-timber structures of Lancashire and Cheshire, and stands in an advantageous situation, two miles and a-half south of Stockport, elevated on a terraced knoll, commanding a view of the Lyme Hills, with trees clustered about it, and a slope below to a little stream in the park.

At the end of the fourteenth century, the elder co-heiress of Geoffrey de Bromale, whose family took its name from the place, having married John de Davenport, the estate passed to the family which continued to hold it until a few years ago. The new owner, who died about the year 1400, was followed in possession by his descendants, until the estate came to Sir William Davenport, who was knighted at Leith, near Edinburgh, in 1544. Long before this time Bramall Hall had risen upon the hill.

It was in the time of Sir William Davenport and Dame Dorothy, his wife, between 1590 and 1600, that the house was subjected to considerable changes, which gave it almost the aspect it bears to-day. We shall, however, before describing



THE GREAT HALL, EAST SIDE.