

where the trefoil panelling above is united with twisted pillars, richly capped, and a cornice over the portal in which the discerning eye will detect a faint trace of the classic influence. There is entrancing fascination at the very portal, which is sustained wherever we go in this superb dwelling-place.

Within the court the same character of elaborated structural timbering is seen, with the same enriched detail. Opposite to the entrance is the porch admitting to the house, with a projecting gabled structure to the left of it, and the truly magnificent bays on the right, each comprising five sides of an octagon, which William Moreton and Richard Dale built. The porch itself is remarkably beautiful, with a low Tudor arch, twisted pillars, and advancing stages above, with quatrefoils, supporting the window of the upper room and the gable. As to the unrivalled bays, the pictures are better description than words. Yet attention may be drawn to the charming mouldings of mullions and transoms, the admirable character of the window leading, the delightful scroll carving, the trefoil-headed structural panelling, all most deftly moulded, and again the variety of the quatrefoil adornment on the hollow above, carrying up the eye to the magnificent windows and the gable. Much as there is even now of beautiful timbering in England, and particularly in Lancashire and Cheshire, we do not know anything to rival this. It will be observed that the structure rises from a plane base of squared stone, but everything



THE WESTERN GABLE OF THE GALLERY.

else is wood, plaster, lead, and glass, with, we believe, some wicker in the construction. The gables and ridges give a most admirable skyline.

On the right of the lobby or passage-way, entered from the porch, is the old Banqueting Hall, answering to the great halls of the preceding period, and having the characteristic feature of a magnificent bay window. Here the Hall has not the lofty, stately form of earlier times, and the apartment is not large, but the grand character of the work, its subdued richness, the fine colouring of the panelling, and the excellent details complete a domestic interior of rare loveliness. A great moulded oaken beam crosses the opening of the bay internally, supported by carved spandrels, one adorned with a traceried pattern, such as was much used in Perpendicular architecture, and the other with a grotesque animal. Some old glass remains in the house, but, of course, much has been broken. Now, or recently, there were inscriptions on the panes, for it appears to have been the desire of the

Moretons that their friends should leave such memorials of themselves. Thus were inscribed: "Somerford Old-field, 11 of Apr., 1627"; "Henry Mainwaringe—All change I scorne"; "Margaret Moreton, Aug. 3, 1649"; and others. The arms of Moreton and Brereton in the glass, the badge of Lancaster, the rebus of the Moretons—M and W intertwined, with a tun—and other devices add to the interest of the structure.

The magnificent panelled Drawing Room is illustrated in two of the pictures. Its ceiling, of solid oak, with heavy main and secondary moulded ribs, and its deeply-



THE EASTERN GABLE OF THE GALLERY.