

Townshends, Yelvertofts, Wodehouses, and De Greys held to their ancient faith, and the county can show many a priest's hiding-place to-day.

Edmund Bedingfeld, knighted at the coronation of Richard III., was the builder of Oxburgh Hall, which he received permission to castellate in 1482—"that he according to his will and pleasure may build, make, and construct walls and towers with stone, lime and gravel, around and below his manor of Oxburgh, in the county of Norfolk, and enclose that manor with walls and towers of this kind; also embattle, crenellate, and machicolate those walls and towers"—and, further, he was to have a weekly market, to be held on Friday, together with a court of "*Pie-Poudre*," to which the disputants of the market-place, fresh from the dusty quarrel, with *pieds poudreux*, might resort for instant and ready justice from the seneschal.

The date of Oxburgh Hall is thus definitely known, though, if it were uncertain, we should be able to fix it approximately, owing to the characteristic features of the house being in the earliest so-called Tudor style. The great gate-tower on the north side is a grand turreted work of venerable brick, with two lofty angle turrets, comparable in some ways to the famous tower at Layer Marney. In one of the turrets is a winding stair, and in the other are small apartments, vaulted and groined. We may still note the crenellations and embattlements of the builder, and in the spring of the great arch aloft from turret to turret, the machicolation which was to enable the defenders within to pour molten lead or missiles upon the heads of the assailants at the gate. There is also the quadrangular form of the house, and its enclosure by a complete moat, in which are reflected the picturesque walls, oriels, embattled gables, twisted chimneys, and other picturesque features.

There is a pleasant inner court, but unfortunately the great Banqueting Room on the south side, described by old Blomefield as 54ft. long

and 34ft. broad, with an oaken roof similar to that of Westminster Hall, "equal in height to the length of it, and having been lately very agreeably ornamented and improved," was improved out of existence altogether in 1778. An embattled wall and corridor took its place. Pugin says of the hall that it was furnished with two oriels or bays at the upper end and a screen at the lower, separating it from the lobby and kitchens in the usual fashion of ancient dining-halls. The effect of the removal of this imposing chamber was to make Oxburgh Hall a square of three sides facing the south, and having on the north the Entrance Tower and Porter's Lodge, with a modernised Dining Room, on

the west side the Library and Saloon with an ante-room, and on the east various offices. In a turret projecting from the east tower is the hiding-place in the wall, about 5ft. square, entered through a trapdoor concealed in the floor, the door being formed of a wooden frame enclosing bricks, centred on an iron axle, and contrived to open when pressed on one side.

King Henry VII. visited Oxburgh apparently in 1487, and still the "King's Room" is shown in the gateway tower. It is an extremely interesting and curious apartment, 33ft. long and 20ft. broad, and in every way an admirable

exemplification of the domestic interiors of its early time. The walls have the ancient linen pattern in the panelling and curious old tapestry hanging above, representing subjects which are uncertain, though in one an ecclesiastic seems to be giving his blessing to a king. The oaken bedstead has a coverlet and curtains of green velvet, with various devices of beasts and birds embroidered. They are named, as, for example, "a swalloe," "a leparde," and "th' ostrich," and are believed to have been worked by the hand of Mary Queen of Scots and Bess of Hardwicke, Countess of Shrewsbury, who was one of her custodians. Sir Henry Bedingfeld, grandson of the builder of Oxburgh, one of the



A WINDOW IN A CORRIDOR.