

the stonework, as of the timber, are extremely good.

It was Sir William Norris who, in the year 1490, began the present timbered house at Speke. His son Henry fought under Sir Edward Stanley at Flodden in 1513, and was one of those who received autograph letters of thanks from Henry VIII. Then succeeded another Sir William Norris, who, in 1547, fought at Musselburgh. Three years previously he had joined Lord Hertford's expedition, which sacked the Palace of Holyrood and burned Edinburgh. From the Royal Palace he removed a number of books, notably a copy of Bartolus, and four folios of the Laws of Scotland inscribed in his own hand (May 11th, 1544), as heirlooms at Speke. They are now preserved in the Athenæum Library in Liverpool. Tradition has always maintained that the architecturally carved panelling at one end of the Great Hall at Speke was taken from Holyrood.

During the progress of the building, Sir William often resided at his seat near Chester,

where he was Sergeant of the Bridge Gate. His family remained Roman Catholic, and in building the Hall a chapel was not omitted. It was placed to the left of the principal entrance, and has long been used as a servants' hall, Speke now having a church of its own. After 1547, becoming too old for active service, he pushed forward the building of Speke, and about 1560 added the genealogical mantel-piece in the Great Drawing Room. Sir William himself was twice married, and had in all nineteen children, as is recorded in this curious carving. Edward Norris, his eldest surviving son, lived a quiet life, and completed the present Hall, retaining only the old stables of the previous buildings. In 1598 he added to the principal entrance a stone porch (unroofed) and parapets to the bridge over the moat.

Five generations later Mary Norris inherited the property, in 1726, and ten years afterwards married Lord Sydney Beauclerk. The fine gentlemen of this family were absentees, and not only shamefully neglected the house, but



THE DRAWING-ROOM.