

SMITHILLS HALL, BOLTON, LANCASHIRE.

WITHIN some three miles of the busy Lancashire town of Bolton-le-Moors, noisy with the hum of the spindle and the rattle of the shuttle in the loom, stands ancient Smithills Hall, apart in its gardens, and preserving its old-time splendour undimmed. In these pages the interiors of several of the black and white—or “magpie,” as it is sometimes called—timber-work houses of Lancashire and Cheshire are depicted, and Smithills is one of the finest of them. What is especially gratifying in regard to this antique house is that, though it lies so near to a manufacturing town, it is maintained in something even greater than its pristine charm. Such additions as have been made to fit it for a modern habitation are in admirable taste, and the stone enlargements

are in excellent harmony with the old structure, while beautiful gardens and a good park are the setting of the place.

The site of the Hall presents many analogies with those of other Lancashire houses, and it is reasonable to think that it was selected because of the facilities it presented for defence. The old gate-house seems to have been at the south-west corner of the quadrangle, as is marked by an avenue of limes leading that way. The quadrangle is not enclosed, as in some houses of the class, but is open on the south side, and the more modern erections have been added in an extension westward.

In very ancient times the place belonged to the great house of Lacy, and it passed to the Stanleys of Lathom, and then to the Radcliffes,



THE LINEN-PATTERN PANELLING OF THE DINING-ROOM.