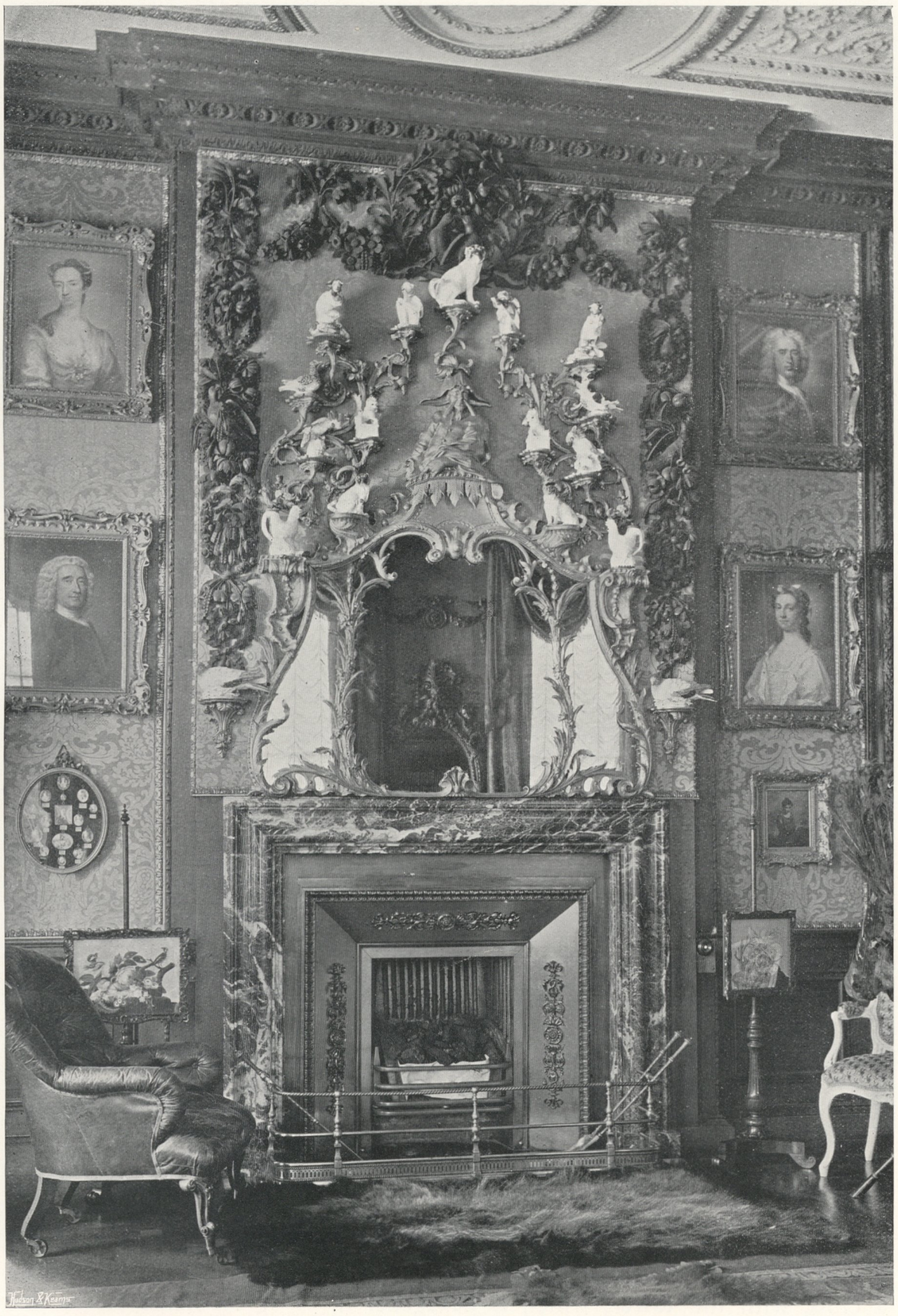
MELBURY HOUSE, DORSET.

MELBURY HOUSE, Lord Ilchester's splendid country place, is pre-eminent among the mansions of Dorsetshire, and few houses in England are more nobly seated or command a fairer prospect. Representing various successive styles of architecture, it is girt about with a quaint yet harmonious dignity, and impresses the spectator as representing the taste of many successive members of the family of its noble owner. Well worthy of the house, too, is the prospect which its windows command, and it would be a difficult task to discover a great estate in which the beauties of Nature and of man's handiwork are more harmoniously united.

Much might be said of the glories of its landscape prospects and the beauties of its park, its woods, its gardens, and its grounds, but our purpose is with the house itself. Melbury was built, according to Leland, by Sir Giles Strangways, who died in 1547, "with a lofty and fresche tower," but some part of the mansion may be assigned to an earlier date, though not before the fifteenth century, which is also the period when the village church was built. The whole house seems to have been largely reconstructed at the beginning of the eighteenth century, embodying much of its predecessor, which both Leland and Croker



THE CHIMNEY-PIECE IN THE SQUARE DRAWING-ROOM.