speak of as the "largest and completest" in the county. Stephen Fox, projector of, and generous benefactor to, Chelsea Hospital, created Lord Ilchester and Stavordale and Baron of Redlynch in 1747, and Earl of Ilchester in 1756, was the first of his family to be ennobled, and he added the name of Strangways to his own upon his marriage.

The plan of Melbury forms three limbs of a cross, with the tower, which is hexagonal in shape, rising in the midst. The east front is of the period of Queen Anne, and has a fine classic portico, a stone bridge of ten arches leading to the main entrance. The house is full of beautiful, rare, and curious objects; and the dignity and charm of its rooms are sufficient reason for the love that Lord and Lady Ilchester have always retained for this beautiful Dorset seat, although they have others in the county in Abbotsbury Castle and Chantmarle.



THE BILLIARD-ROOM AND CORRIDOR.

In some ways the most conclusive test of a great house is the drawing-rooms, and if this is applied, Melbury certainly comes out triumphant. In not a few of the rooms in the mansion are