COLESHILL HOUSE, BERKSHIRE.

THIS beautiful, and in many ways remarkable, house, which is located in a parish in Berkshire, stands elevated upon the brow of a hill in its fine park of some 300 acres, and commands a romantic prospect of the richly-wooded country towards Highworth and the plain to the north-west. It has the great distinction of being a work of the ripest talent of Inigo Jones, erected in 1650, but two years before the death of that eminent architect. Hereabout had been seated from mediæval times the wealthy family of Pleydell (though Coleshill came to them later) whose ultimate heiress, Harriot, daughter of Sir Mark Stuart Pleydell, Bart., married in January, 1748, as his first wife, William Bouverie, Viscount Folkestone and Baron Longford, who was created Baron Pleydell-Bouverie of Coleshill and Earl of the County of Radnor in 1765. Sir Mark Pleydell lived until 1768, and it was not until that date that the estate came to the family of its present owner in the person of his grandson, Jacob Pleydell-Bouverie, Earl of Radnor. There are memorials of the Pleydells in the interesting old church of Coleshill, where Thomas Pleydell founded a chantry in 1499, which was rebuilt as the south chapel by Sir Mark Pleydell in 1738.



THE GALLERY OF THE HALL.

Coleshill House, however, had been a possession of the Pratts, and had come to the Pleydells through a marriage, in 1666, with Mary, sole daughter of Sir George Pratt, this lady being subsequently heiress of her brother, Sir Henry Pratt. It appears to have been Margaret, wife of Sir George Pratt (which Margaret continued in possession until 1698), who caused Coleshill House to be built from the designs of Inigo Jones. In 1648, after compounding for his part in the Civil War, the great artist went to work again, and, says old Aubrey, the south