IGHTHAM MOTE, KENT.

IGHTHAM MOTE is a most engaging agglomeration of different styles of architecture, toned and tempered by Nature, and protected by intelligent ownership. Every age has had its say, every owner—in greater or less degree—has set his mark; but at four particular moments (half a man's lifetime is an "historical moment") much of what remains was done.

Hasted, the historian of Kent, considered the Mote to have belonged to the family of Haut from early Plantagenet days; but we now know, by his surviving will, that it was held in Edward III.'s time by a Sir Thomas Cawne, and as this coincides with the date of the older portions of the existing house, he is, by conjecture, their builder. Lying on the eastern side of the quadrangle, they form the typical dwelling of a fourteenth century knight or squire of good means and position, and subsequent alterations and additions do not prevent our realising their original plan and workmanship. The hall, 30ft. by 20ft., was entered by an arched doorway straight from the court; at the lower end two doorways led respectively to the kitchen and buttery. It had no "screens" or minstrel gallery, no oriel or dais, and probably no chimney. These features became general



THE ENTRANCE.

only in the fifteenth century ; in the fourteenth they were only beginning to develop in great houses. The fine, high-pitched roof of open timber-work has its main beams resting on corbels representing human figures crushed by their load, or seeking the easiest way of bearing it. It is lit by windows on either side ; the easterly one is original, but the five-light looking west on to the court is of later date, put in at the same time as the chimney arch. The panelling and mantel are quite recent, having been added by Mr. Norman Shaw in 1872, otherwise the hall is as Sir Thomas built it. Towards the upper end an arched doorway led to a staircase, at the top of which were the solar, or private chamber, and the chapel, both lofty rooms with open timber roofs. The usual aperture by which those in the solar could look down into the hall is wanting. But there is one, and this is infrequent, between solar and chapel, so that the sick could see the altar and hear Mass without moving. The solar is nearly in its original state, the chapel turned into bedrooms. Some further offices below, and perhaps another chamber or two above, completed Sir Thomas's dwelling. What kind and extent of outbuildings occupied the other sides of the quadrilateral within the Mote we can only conjecture. They were gradually replaced by the extended dwelling-house. When and how the Cawnes gave way to the Hauts, no known record shows. It was probably by marriage, as the Hauts had long been substantial Kentish squires, and in the second half of the fifteenth century Richard Haut was in possession of the Mote, and, to his undoing, became mixed up in the politics of the time. His mother belonged to another of the lesser Kentish families, who came to the fore when her brother, Sir Richard Woodville, who had taken part in Henry V.'s campaigns, married the widow of that king's brother, the Duke of Bedford. The deep shadow of disfavour which fell over the whole Lancastrian party when Edward IV. won the Crown was suddenly raised from the Woodvilles when Edward took Sir Richard's daughter to wife, raised him to the Earldom of Rivers, and loaded him with lucrative office and great estate. His nephew, Haut, shared, in a modest way, the advantages and dangers of his relation's good fortune. He was Sheriff of Kent in 1478, and again in the year of Edward's sudden and unexpected death. This event found him at Ludlow, where the Prince of Wales held his Court under the guardianship of Anthony Woodville, who now set out towards London with the boy King, but, meeting with the Duke of Gloucester at Stony Stratford, was arrested by him. He was sent, together with Haut and other of his kin, to Pontefract, where they were shortly afterwards beheaded. Gloucester, thrusting his nephews into the Tower whence they never emerged, assumed the Crown as Richard III., and appointed his faithful henchman, Sir Robert Brackenbury, to the Kentish Shrievalty and gave him Haut's forfeited estate. This was in 1483. Two years later Brackenbury fell with his master on Bosworth Field, and in due course the Hauts were reinstated in the Mote by Henry VII., whose distant connection they became when he married Edward's daughter by Elizabeth Woodville. A good deal of work, including the gateway tower, was done at this time, and the question is, Who did it? "Edward Haut in 1486," say the authorities, and mention is made of the tradition that Henry and this Queen came hither visiting their "cousin." But, in the first place, it was not till the third year of Henry VII. that the Mote was restored to Edward Haut, eldest son of the beheaded Richard ; that is, not till after the middle of 1487. And, in the second place, the said Edward was only seven years old at the time, and when he came of age he sold the place. His father, on the other hand, had held it during the whole of the twenty years of the Woodville domination and affluence, and the scanty and old-fashioned accommodation of the Edwardian age would not be likely to have satisfied him. So probably he put up the tower, added rooms on either side, gave more light to the hall by putting in the great five-light window, and more warmth to it by building in the chimney and fireplace—a feature almost unknown in Edwardian halls, whose fires burnt on a "reredos" or hearth in the middle of the floor, above which the roof was fitted with louvres for the escape of the smoke. But material wealth and ideas of comfort and luxury were now making rapid and continuous strides, and the improvements at the close of the fifteenth century were no longer sufficient once the sixteenth had opened. When Sir Richard Clement bought the Mote of Edward Haut, about the time that Henry VIII. became King—the very moment of transition from mediævalism to modernity—he found it antiquated if not dilapidated, and at once set to work upon it. It was no longer fashionable for a whole household of all grades to dine in common in the hall, nor was it now quite the thing to live and sleep in the same room. The chapel was much in the way of domestic extension, but in a convenient place for sleeping accommodation, so chimneys and a floor were put in, the one tall window was made into two, and an upper and lower bedroom were thus gained. For a new and larger chapel there was room on the north side of the court, and here Sir Richard built it of timber-work, setting it on the old wall and largely overhanging it on the moat side so as to get sufficient width. While providing a public approach to it by a wide staircase from the court, he arranged private access from the family rooms, and, pleased with the old arrangement of a squint between solar and chapel, put lattice-work—a bit of it shows on the right of the reredos hanging—in the



NORTH SIDE OF THE OLD HALL.



THE HALL FROM ENTRANCE.

little room behind the altar. Except that the windows are quite devoid of tracery, the whole feeling of this chapel, which remains practically unchanged, is Gothic. The "poppy-head" stalls, the traceried screen, the canopied pulpit, the linen-fold panelling show no trace of the Renaissance. The oak roof reveals to us both the definite date of the building and the loyal spirit of its builder. The spaces between its ribs are painted not only with his own arms but with a repetition of the badges of his King and Queen—the Tudor rose and portcullis, and the pomegranate of Aragon — as may yet be faintly seen even in the illustration. Before the rising star of Anne Boleyn had made it unwise to commemorate Catherine in connection with her husband, Sir Richard had finished his chapel and had reglazed the hall window, where the same devices appear.

It were tedious and technical to attempt to catalogue all the Clement alterations — to

show by further examination of chimneys and windows how much was added in extent and comfort. But one little detail is interesting as fixing the date and authorship of the varying styles. Sir Richard's work is so Gothic, and—where the old spirit continued—the detail of the early sixteenth century is so like that of the late fifteenth, that even a well-informed visitor, casually looking round, might be justified in denying that a Haut had done anything, and in attributing to the Clements the whole of the late mediæval work. But look carefully at the windows of the tower in the illustration. The upper one, as that of the hall, which shows in our picture of the doorway, is of the same model. But the lower one, though it seeks to deck itself with the same plumage, is really an interloper. It is by another hand—belongs to a later school. The first breath of the Renaissance had reached Sir Richard's mason, and he depressed the Gothic arch and cast aside the Gothic narrowness. This window bears the Clement arms, and therefore cannot be later.

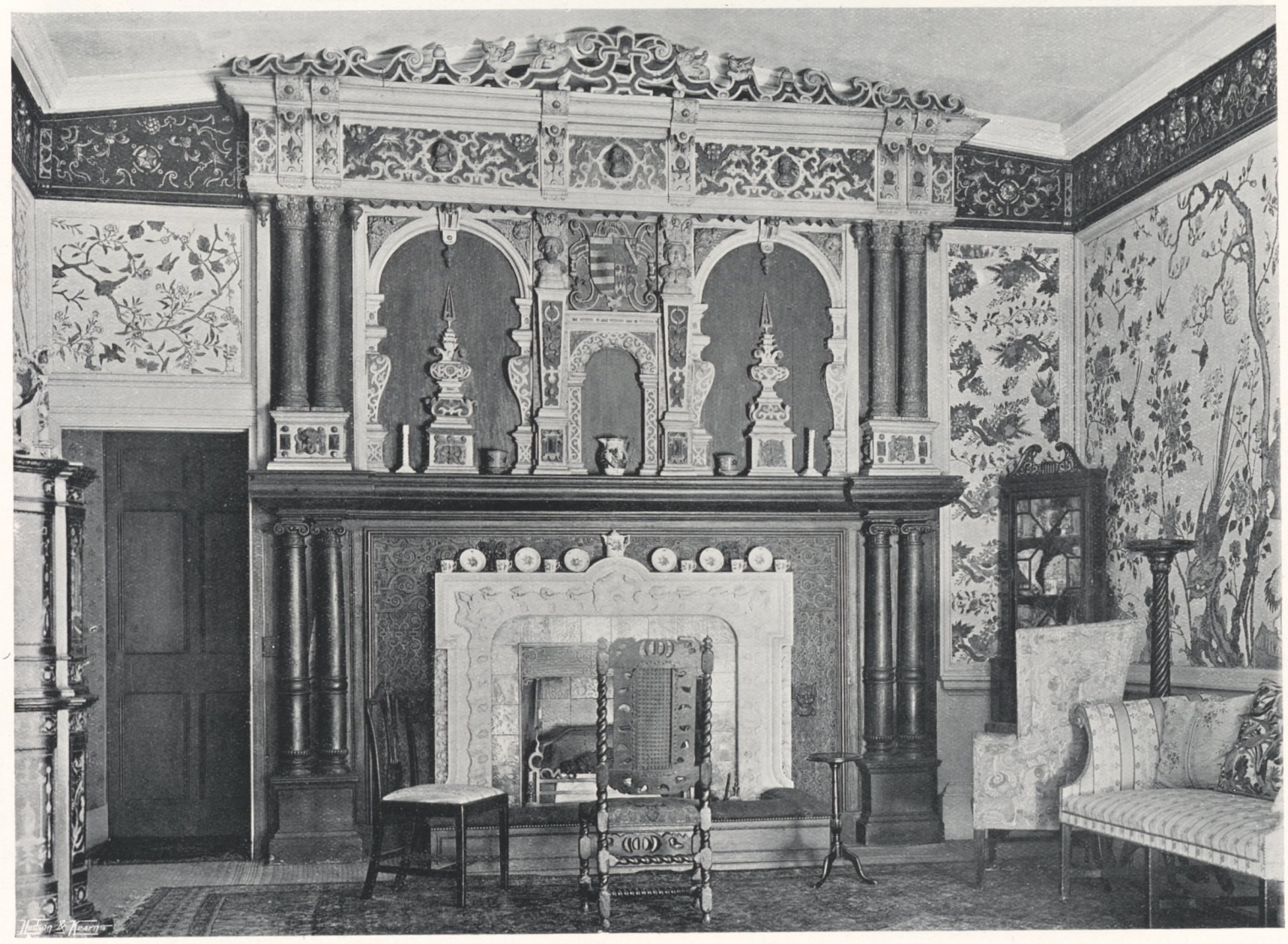


THE CHAPEL.

It follows then that the others are earlier, and that the tower in its main features and structure dates from the Haut ownership. The Clement dynasty was short lived. Neither Sir Richard nor his brother had sons, and the latter's son-in-law sold to Sir John Allen, a noted mercer and citizen of London, who was twice Lord Mayor under Henry VIII.—the second time, Stow tells us, "by the King's appointment; he was of his Council, a Man of great Wisdom and also of great Charity." As this was in 1536—the year of the final breach with Rome and the suppression of the lesser monasteries—the King needed a trusty man in the civic chair. Yet Sir John's son, Sir Christopher, seems, under Elizabeth, to have reverted to the old order, and to have been in danger of suffering the penalties of recusancy. In 1585 he "did cause a Cooke of his to be sett in stockes for some kind of misdemeanour at Ightham," and, thereupon, the cook told tales. Soon it was reported that "it were good that Sir Christopher Allen wold lyve in better sort, for he kepeth a vile and papisticall house." This brought the Lord-Lieutenant on the scene with a search party, but they drew blank. As Sir Christopher died very shortly after this, we hear no more about it, and in a few years the property had passed into other hands.

The new purchaser was a member of the Northumbrian family of Selby, but, like the Allens, he seems to have been satisfied with the house as left by the Clements, for we find little that we can assign to the period of the later Tudors. His nephew, Sir William Selby, however, succeeding in 1611, and backed by a strenuous and capable wife, set to on the interior. His chief work was the drawing-room, which occupies the whole of the upper floor north of the tower, and of which the fine mantel-piece is illustrated. It looks somewhat earlier than Sir William's date, but as here and elsewhere on similar work, such as that in his wife's room, his and her arms quartered appear prominently in the decoration, it cannot have been done in his uncle's time. It has the double columns above and below, of which there are so many examples in this volume, but the arcaded arrangement of the centre is unusual.

Since then the "improver" has been unusually modest in his achievements. Somewhere about Wren's time a classic window, in itself of good design, was thrust into the north wall of the drawing-room without obliterating the traces of its predecessor. Later still, under "Strawberry Hill" influence, "Gothic" sashes made their appearance in several places in the court. All this is a pity; the old were in character and of a better age and greater interest. But being there, it is well that modern purists have not prevailed to remove them; they have become part of the place, a sub-section



IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.



THE EAST BRIDGE.

of its history. The old ones are gone and cannot be replaced, nor can they be imitated except conjecturally, and there lurks danger about these conjectural imitations; they are often the cloak under cover of which the modern architect ruthlessly destroys that which he cannot create—the mixed handiwork of succeeding centuries, at first, perhaps, garish and discordant, but mellowed and harmonised by Time, that great pacificator of the combats and quarrels of hostile styles and warring colours. Much of the enticing charm of the Mote arises from its being not the work of one man and one moment, but of long ages and many generations; and the present owner has shown a wise and laudable hesitancy to unnecessarily tear away even the least admirable of his predecessors' efforts.



THE GATE TOWER FROM WITHIN THE COURTYARD.