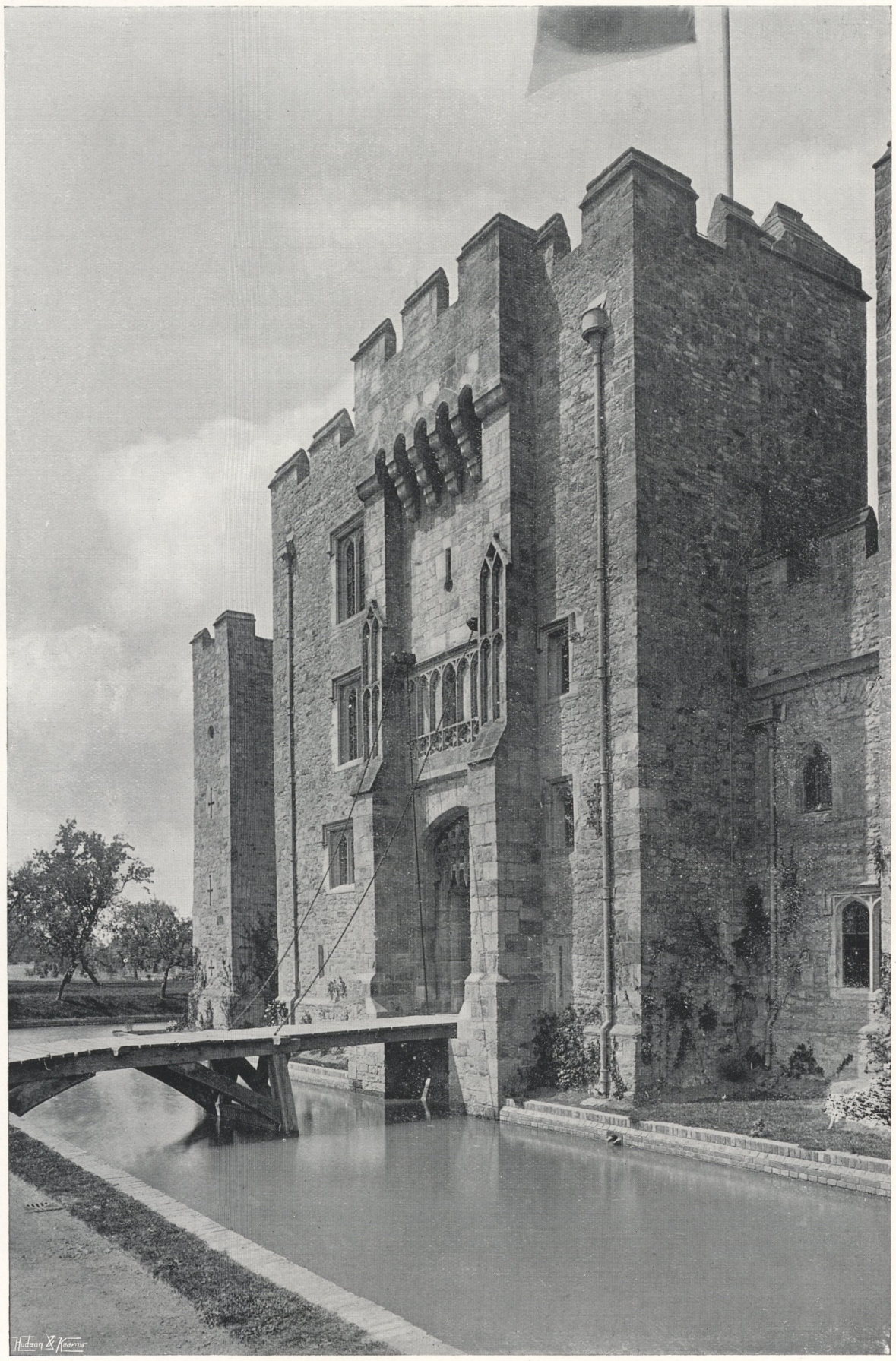
HEVER CASTLE,

KENT.

SOME measure of controversy rages to-day around the grey walls of old Hever. The immense works which have lately been carried out upon them, within them and around them have for some time attracted much public attention and much archæological and architectural criticism, and now antiquarian and genealogical interest is aroused by the result of the careful investigation which has raised several points of doubt and exposes several matters of past error in the history of Hever's early days and ownership.

Until the recent searches at the Record Office by Mr. J. Coode Adams, and at the Heralds' College by Garter King and his able assistant, Mr. Keith W. Murray, the account given by Hasted in his "History of Kent" was accepted as correct. He tells us of a William de Hevere who had a moiety of the manor and was sheriff under Edward I.; of another William who held the entire manor, had licence to crenellate under Edward III. and whose two daughters again divided the manor between their husbands, de Brocas



THE GATEHOUSE.



THE GATEHOUSE FROM THE SOUTH-EAST.



WITHIN THE COURTYARD.

and de Cobham; and, finally, of the Lord Cobham who under Henry IV. once more joined the estate and whose grandson sold it to Geoffrey Boleyn. Some of this is doubtful and some incorrect. It is clear, from a surviving grant by William, parish of Hever which lies on the low ground of the Eden Valley after that stream has flowed through Edenbridge and before it reaches Chiddingstone. It is also certain that there was an early division of the manor into Hever



THE TIMBER-FRAMED COURTYARD.

son of Walter de Hevere, of the Church of Saint Peter in his parish to the monks of the little Abbey of Cumbwell, that the chief owners here about 1200 A.D. were a family who had come to be called after the name of that Kentish Brocas and Hever Cobham, and that it was on the latter part that the castle was built. But as to licences to crenellate, none seems discoverable until that granted by Richard II. to Sir John de Cobham of Blackborough, in County



THE STAIRCASE HALL.

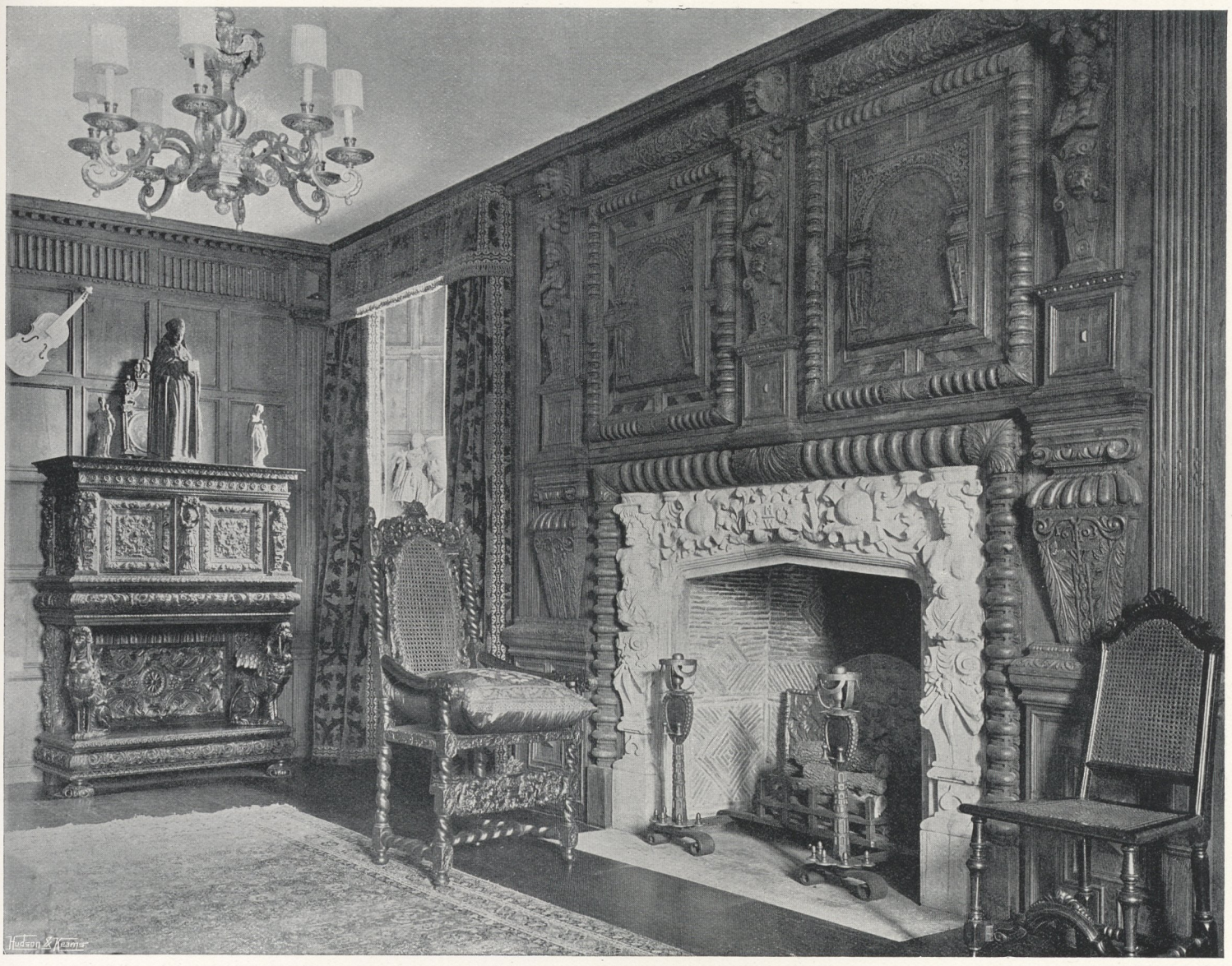
Devon, in 1384. This was nearly a century later than the date when the marriage of Reginald de Cobham with Joan, heiress of William de Hever, had brought all or part of the Hever manor into the Cobham family. But this Reginald de Cobham of Blackborough was possessed of it and made it his residence follows from his licence to crenellate and from his choosing the parish church as the burial-place for himself, his wife and son. It is, therefore, reasonable to suppose



THE SCREEN IN THE BANQUETING HALL.

would be the son of John de Cobham of Allington, and father of Reginald, first Baron Cobham of Sterborough in Surrey, and how the Hever manor came to the distantly connected Devonshire branch does not appear. That John that he largely rebuilt the castle, although much of the solid outside walls, often altered, patched and repaired in the centuries that followed, bear evidence of still earlier date. He was the last of its Cobham owners; but it did not, as Hasted

leads us to suppose, pass from Cobhams to Boleyns directly, but with various intervening ownerships. By his will, Sir John de Cobham directed that it should be sold, and it found a purchaser in the person of Sir Stephen Scrope, brother of Richard II.'s Minister, whom he made Earl of Wiltshire, but who was executed on Henry IV.'s accession. The Scropes were a Northern family, and Sir Stephen held the manor of Wyghton on the Wold in Yorkshire; but his brother's position at Court may have made him wish for a Southern home as well. When he died he left a son of about twelve years of age, whose tale of woe sheds much light upon mediæval wardships. His mother took as her second husband Sir John Fastolf, who never let slip any legal opportunity for making money. "He bought and sold me as a beast against all right and law, to mine own hurt more than 1,000 marks," wrote the younger Stephen in later years. Sir John was a strenuous, irascible man of hard dealings, and it was probably his keenness for a bargain, his insistence on the letter of that law which he knew so well, and his stern treatment of any lapse or carelessness on the part of his agents and retainers, which strangely translated him into the Falstaff of Shakespeare. As a matter of fact, whatever his defects may have been, he was a capable soldier, an able councillor, a prudent administrator of his inherited and acquired estates, an enlightened patron of literature, such as it was in his day, and a trusty financial agent and money-lender to princes of the blood. Yet his stepson might well complain of him, for he sold to Chief Justice Gascoigne for 500 marks his wardship, which carried with it the rents and profits of the estate during the minority and the marriage of the ward to anyone not lower in station than himself. Three years later Gascoigne seems to have wished to marry young Scrope to a lady not thought desirable by the family, and Sir John bought him back. But he took such toll of his estates, and made such hard bargains in the matter of his marriage, that when the minor, on coming of age, wished to join in the French wars under the banner of Duke Humphrey of Gloucester, Hever had to be sold to obtain the necessary funds. His father had evidently obtained both Hever Brocas and Hever Cobham, for it is both that Sir John Fastolf and others convey to Sir Roger Fiennes in 1423. From him it passed to his brother James, first Baron Saye and Sele, one of the Suffolk Ministry rendered unpopular by the necessity of making a humiliating peace with France relinquishing Henry V.'s conquests. The Duke of Suffolk, on his way to exile, was murdered at sea off Dover. The Ministers, among whom Lord Saye was now prominent, were reported to have threatened that



OLD JACOBEAN WORK FROM DEVONSHIRE.

the murder would be visited on Kent, already chafing under heavy exactions unequally raised by nominees of the great landowners. The county rose under the leadership of Jack Cade, and, after the battle of Sevenoaks, the leaders of the King's forces found their men so sympathetic towards the rebels, so hostile to the "traitors" about the King,



IN THE MANNER OF GRINLING GIBBONS.

that Lord Saye was sacrificed and sent to the Tower, whence, on Cade's admission to the City, he was brought to the Guildhall and arraigned, and thence taken by the rebels and beheaded. The second Lord Saye parted with Hever. By marriage, he had come into possession of Broughton Castle in Oxon, and Hever, if ever it had been a residence of the family, was no longer a valued property. The new purchaser was Sir Geoffrey Boleyn, a man of good Norfolk blood, who had married a daughter and co-heiress of Lord Hoo and Hastings, and was a Lord Mayor and mercer of London, apparently connected in business with Sir John Fastolf—the owner of quite a fleet of ships—whom he calls "my maister." Among Sir John's various land purchases had been the manor of Blickling in Norfolk, an account of which is included in this volume, and which he afterwards sold to Sir Geoffrey for "gret payment" and a reserved annuity. This was some years before his purchase in 1462 of Hever, which was very likely in this case, as in that of Scropes and Fienneses, only added to other possessions as an investment, or as a place within reasonable riding distance from London. In any case, there appears no reason, any more than there is any evidence, documentary or architectural, to attribute to Sir Geoffrey any extensive building operations at Hever. On the south or gatehouse front the boldly machicolated and elegantly panelled projecting portion surrounding and surmounting the entrance archway has some appearance of being an addition, and though very likely of John de Cobham's time, it may have been added by Sir Geoffrey to give the place some distinction; but there are so few of the original fifteenth century windows or other details remaining that, in the absence of written record, the date of the main building must remain somewhat conjectural. Even the little windows of the old kitchen of almost late Edwardian character, which appear on the right-hand side of the view of

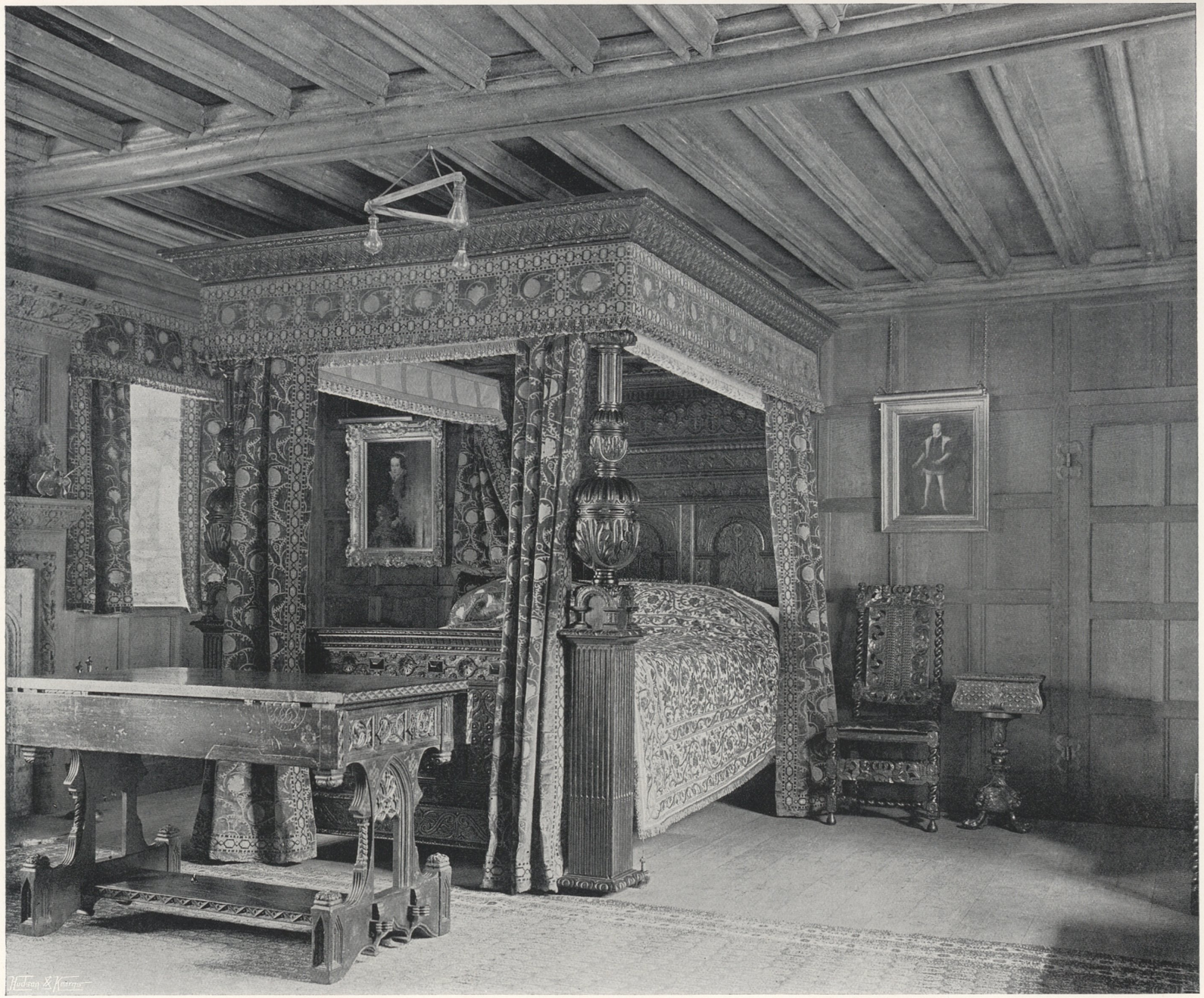


THE WITHDRAWING-ROOM.

the east front, are not original. A drawing taken some forty-five years ago shows such as existing, but, later, new windows of different character and at a different elevation were put in. Careful search, however, has now revealed enough of the original stonework still bedded in the wall to make the present windows almost certainly a correct copy. Most of the Gothic windows of the castle are, however, of later style, of the full Henry VIII. type, and were no doubt inserted by Sir William Boleyn or when his son, Sir Thomas, took up his residence at Hever and desired to assimilate it, in some degree, to the lighter, ampler and more comfortable dwellings of his day. Sir Thomas was Sir Geoffrey's grandson. His father inherited both Blickling and Hever, but the latter only came to Thomas's share, the former going to his brother James. Hever, therefore, became of greater residential importance than heretofore, and Sir Thomas was one who held his head high. The well-spent money of the mercer had given the Boleyns such position as enabled them to marry well. Sir Thomas's mother was a daughter of the Earl of Ormond, his wife was of the ducal House of Norfolk. He therefore laid himself out to be of the band determined to drink their fill of whatever good things were obtainable at the Court of the Tudor Henries ; to seize what they could of place, power or profit ; to indulge, up to the last limits of their purse, in the glories, grandeurs and pleasures of their day, and to be none too scrupulous as to the means used, or afraid of the dangers run in encompassing these objects. He was much employed by Henry VIII. in diplomatic missions, in preparations for the Field of the Cloth of Gold, in governorships as of Norwich Castle. In order to engage the King's favour and so obtain a grant of the Ormond and Rochford titles and estates, he is supposed to have winked at Henry's intrigue with his elder daughter Mary, and was no doubt delighted at the further prospect of wealth and advancement likely to arise from the transference of the Royal affections to the younger and more engaging Anne, whose sojourn at the French Court had given her a charm and finish in all social arts and pastimes which distinguished her, and shortly attracted the Royal suitor. Tradition speaks of the winding of the horn on the hill above Hever announcing his approach, and on the newel of the gatehouse stair there remains what is held to be the Royal cypher graven in the stone. Yet it was, even for that day, a small and simple place that Henry's visits distinguished. The outer walls alone were built of the stone which was somewhat sparsely drawn from the southern hillside close by, and the oaks, which grow profusely in this land of heavy soil, were used as the chief material for other building work. All chimneys



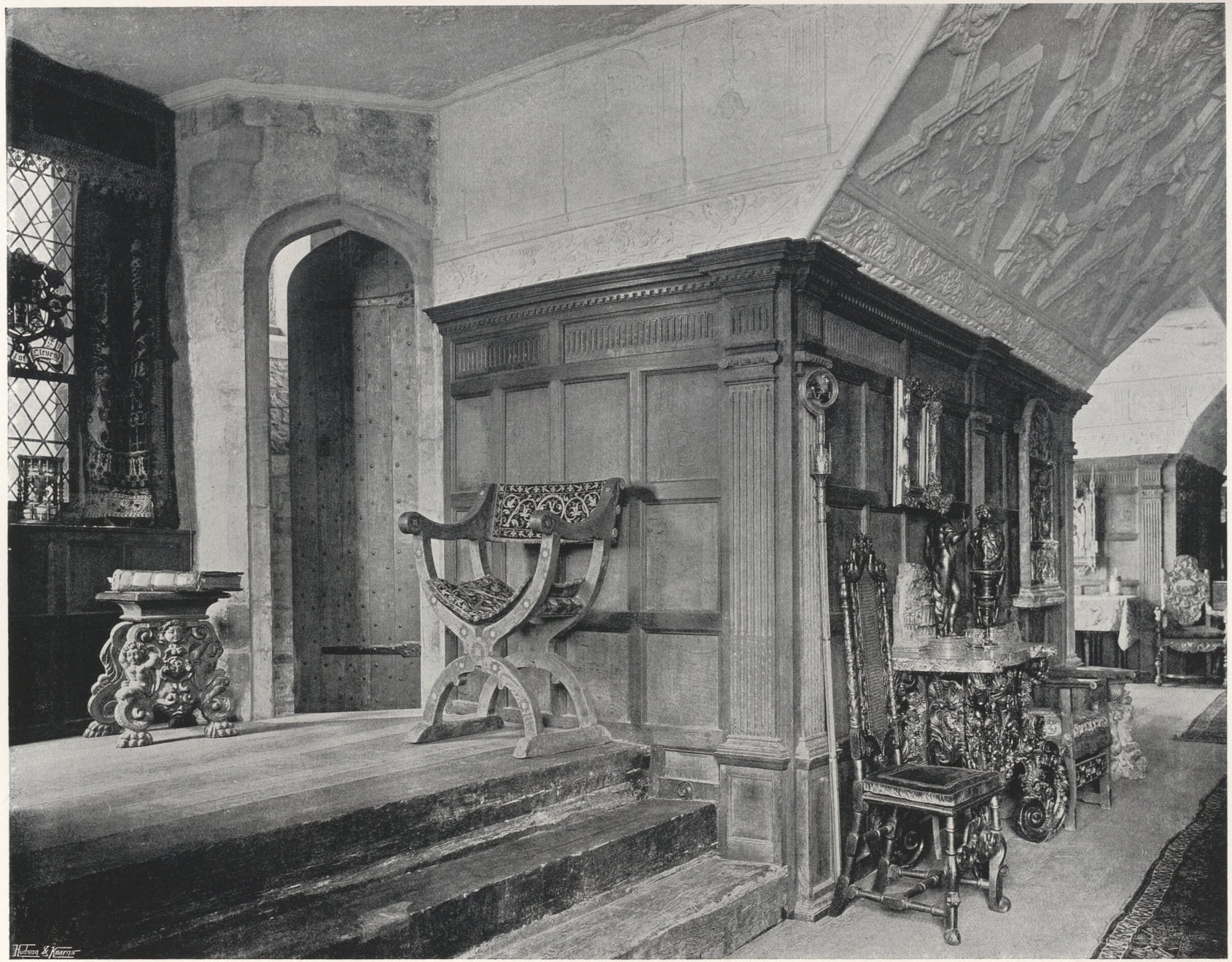
THE CHIMNEY-PIECE IN THE BANQUETING HALL.



"HENRY VIII.'S" CHAMBER.



THE GALLERY.



THE GALLERY BAY AND NEWEL STAIR.



"VISCOUNT ROCHFORD'S" CHAMBER.

were in the massive outer walls, those of the court-yard and partitions being of timber framing filled with plaster. Crossing the court from the gate-house, the hall door, opening into screens, was reached ; on the right lay the kitchen, containing a well, and with its fire-arch set in the eastern wall, which is of such thickness as to have accommodated, later on, ovens and flues vast enough for gossip to transform into secret passages and hiding-holes. On the left, the hall was entered, probably of the present size, but with an open roof. Beyond the dais end, the west wing ground-floor rooms were originally of so low a pitch as probably to have been mere cellarage, but above were parlour and chamber which, like the hall, went up to the roof—a beam and king-post having lately been discovered here in proof of this. Above the east wing offices were further chambers, and the gate-house, of size and strength beyond the average for so small a place, had also a fairly spacious room on each of its upper floors. The decoration was probably as simple as the accommodation. There is no trace at Hever of the

elaborate panelling and woodwork, transitional between Gothic and Renascence, which was just coming into vogue in the houses of great men. The plain walls and sparse furnishing were merely clothed and supplemented, as the fashion then was, with cloth of Arras, tapestries, embroideries, small carpets and cushions of silk and velvet. Such, in more modern times, hardly appeared surroundings sufficiently ample and sumptuous for great King Hal, and Nash draws him handing Anne up the steps of the gallery bay. But on the outer walling of the excrescence of which this bay is now the top there is in the panelled band which divides the second and third storeys the date 1584; moreover, the doorway now opening into the gallery



"ORATORY OF ANNE BOLEYN."



THE LIBRARY.

bay from the top of the newel stair was originally in an outer wall, and opened on to the leads, so that this upper bay is newer than those below it. In Henry VIII.'s time, a palace of Italian inspiration, such as Nonsuch, might well have so new and exotic an apartment as a gallery. But it would find no place in a country knight's modest abode, and would not even come within the range of the improvements of Sir Thomas when he became Earl of Wiltshire and a Knight of the Garter.

The course of Anne's courtship did not run smooth. It agitated all Europe, for the question of England's religion and England's alliances was bound up with it. She became Marchioness of Pembroke while she awaited her queenship, and Hever may often have seen her till the time of her marriage and crowning in 1533. If her courtship had been long and troubled, her married life was short and tragic ; and with the execution of her brother Rochford and herself in 1536 the momentary greatness of Hever and of the Boleyns passed away. Though Anne was afterwards rehabilitated and her daughter became England's great Queen, her marriage was at first declared void, and the College of Heralds will show you, in the Book of Standards, her arms as Marchioness of Pembroke impaled by the Royal arms defaced with ink. Was this done by the angry and vengeful King's own hands ? Her father lived on at his castle ; but his correspondence with Thomas Cromwell, the Minister, on the subject of a quarrel with a neighbour concerning hawks stolen or strayed, shows his nervousness lest use should be made of this at Court against one whose brilliant course was ending in deep shadow. On March 13th, 1539, his faithful retainer Robert Cranwell writes to Cromwell " My good Lord and Master is dead," and shortly after we find Hever in possession of the Crown and granted for life to Anne of Cleves. Reverting on her death in 1557, it was regranted, on easy terms, to Sir Edward Waldegrave, a favourite of Queen Mary and an officer of her household. Sent to the Tower by Elizabeth and dying there in 1561, his son succeeded him, and his grandson fought for Charles and claimed to have lost £50,000 in the process. By one or other of these, much must have been done at Hever. Many of the upper windows and the gables and the other brickwork date from this time, and the then essential gallery was contrived by ceiling the hall and other rooms on the north side and using the 100ft. stretch of roof space thus obtained. The plain but pilastered Jacobean panelling, which our views show, is the chief remnant of old interior work at Hever. In 1717 it again passed to a London Lord Mayor, being purchased by Sir William Humphreys, while Sir Timothy Waldo, who bought it in 1749, was likewise a wealthy City merchant. When, from a descendant of his, Mr. Astor acquired it in 1903, it had, after being used as a farmhouse, been dealt with by a restorer who had

pulled down the very interesting Tudor stabling, which had originally stood by the side of the outer moat, in order to get timber for his work. Of old interior work there was next to none, except the gallery panelling and the beam and rafter ceiling of the room now called Henry VIII.'s bedroom. Perhaps the most interesting thing would have been to replace Hever such as it was when the Waldegraves had given some modest Jacobean finish and development to the Boleyns' simple home. This, however, was out of the question. It was needed as a residence exhibiting fine work, and with the accommodation necessary to a large modern household. With Mr. Frank Pearson as his professional adviser, Mr. Astor wisely determined to leave the old castle, so far as its exterior was concerned, intact (except so far as some careful renovations were necessary on the old lines), and to obtain the extra room needed by building outside the moat, and when obtainable of old material, the semblance of a village of low gabled houses such as might well have nestled beneath the walls of a castle of fifteenth century date, and connecting it with the castle by bridges over the moat. Within the castle itself, the finest possible modern work on the lines of fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth century models was to be introduced. It is this section of Mr. Pearson's creation which we especially illustrate here. It will be seen that, though it is, in its splendour and elaboration, in complete contradiction to Hever's past and Hever's character, yet it presents quite remarkable and excellent examples of both design and craftsmanship, and all this could be carried out without any destruction of ancient work, as such was so generally absent. The gallery has been the least touched, the original panelling having been supplemented by a very admirable plaster-work ceiling, wherein, with much trouble and patience, Mr. Pearson has induced the modern workman to leave aside the mechanical finish so dear to him, and leave some mark of the tool and hand. We have come across no examples of these reproduced Jacobean ceilings where the old feeling and the old surface have been obtained to anything like the extent we find at Hever in several rooms. The attempt is most praiseworthy and the result most satisfying. Without destroying the gallery, it was impossible to give back to the old hall its open roof. This replacement, clearly, had to be foregone, and for plain plaster was substituted a ceiling of elaborately carved panelling. Still more elaborate—perhaps even too much so—is the screen, somewhat recalling that at Compton Wynyates; but modern requirements needed the addition of doors and the insertion of lead lights, and the screen is not so entirely a successful piece of work as the chimney-piece, which, though richer in carved members than most originals of the fifteenth century, is of very great merit. The old kitchen,



"ANNE OF CLEVES'S" CHAMBER.

which had lost all original features, and had had a floor inserted at half-height, has been converted into a staircase hall. Here the Renascence, which in the banqueting hall has been allowed a partnership only with the Gothic, has been given full sway, and that finest surviving example of Renascence woodwork in England, the screen in King's College Chapel at Cambridge, has inspired Mr. Pearson with a design agreeable in line and exquisite in detail. Mr. Frith, the sculptor, has in this case not merely modelled in wax, but executed in wood, almost the whole of the carved work. In the case of the Grinling Gibbons' work in the libraries he modelled only, but the execution shows remarkable craftsmanship on the part of the wood-carvers employed, for it has all Gibbons's subtle dexterity and delicacy of finish worked in a medium which Gibbons never attempted. Instead of the soft lime wood which he was wont to use, sabicu, that hardest of South American timbers, the close-grained cousin of mahogany, has been employed. Mr. Astor had a special admiration for Pepys's well-known bookcases now at Magdalene College, Cambridge, and this fixed the whole decorative scheme of the libraries. Beautiful and finely worked as they are, they do not, in their style, consort quite so successfully with a house of the age and traditions of Hever as does the withdrawing-room, whose walls are panelled in oak inlaid with holly and bog oak, after the fashion of the famous Sizergh room now in the Victoria and Albert Museum. This is not marquetry. The oak background has been grooved and channelled with a chisel to the depth of one-eighth of an inch and the inlay glued in in the ancient manner. The whole of this room is as good an example of the Jacobean style reproduced to-day as is a small parlour of original work of its own age. Of this both the panelling and the stone fire-arch came from an old Devonshire house, and are fine and interesting specimens.

On the first floor a series of bedrooms, named after historic denizens of or visitors to the castle, has been arranged, all exhibiting fine fittings and furniture, and the whole of the ancient portion of the present buildings offers a most exceptional and interesting exhibition of the extremely good results which the modern designer and the modern craftsman, at their best, are able to achieve.



THE EAST FRONT.