HOGHTON TOWER,

LANCASHIRE.

HOGHTONS have been of Hoghton since surnames came into vogue. Their old home is high placed on a hill above Darwen's bank, being the successor to an older one still by the river-side. Originally amid wild and lonely forest land, largely emparked by royal licence as a hunting-ground for its lords, it now sits somewhat uncomfortably in a populous and manufacturing region between Blackburn and Preston, and tall chimneys mar the great outlook to seacoast westward and to Pendle Hill on the north-east. Though not wholly built by him, Hoghton Tower, as it is, is essentially the work of Thomas Hoghton, and bears the date of 1565. Men at Court and on the Southern seaboard were already building, under Italian influence, palaces rather than castles. But in distant Lancashire the English spirit was retained, and Thomas built Gothically still, with battlements and gate-towers, a place which he and his stout fellows might hold against the armed attacks of his neighbours. As well he might, for as a result of impounding a widow's cattle, the widow's relatives and supporters outnumbered him in an armed affray and left him dead upon the ground. His house shows the old arrangement; a great forecourt, entered through the arch of an embattled tower, is surrounded by outbuildings and offices, and leads through a second arch to the inner quadrangle. Thence a flight of semi-circular steps lifts the visitor to the still quite Gothic doorway and into the "screens," with kitchens on one side and the two-storeyed banqueting hall on the other, much on the ancient plan, fully lighted on the court side, and with great oriels at the upper end, which is level with the rest. The hall is no longer the general dining-room. The family sits at meat in a separate room at the end of the screens and near the kitchen, and the retainers keep to the offices. Yet there were occasions when the hall could serve its ancient purpose. The slain Thomas's son was among James I.'s first batch of baronets in 1611, and six years later Sir Richard received a visit



NORTH ENTRANCE.



IN THE FIRST COURTYARD.



THE HALL, INNER QUADRANGLE AND STATUE OF WILLIAM OF ORANGE IN LEAD.



THE OUTER GATEWAY.



FROM THE QUADRANGLE OR INNER COURT.

from his sovereign, attracted away from his direct route to Scotland by prospects of hunting the famous red deer of Hoghton. It was determined to do things not merely grandly, but mediævally, and the neighbouring gentry were persuaded, for this rare occasion, to attend in Hoghton livery and help in the service of the King and the great lords of his suite. The bills of fare have survived, and that of "Sunday's dinner the 17th of August 1617, for the Lords' table" includes 19 forms of dishes made of four-footed beasts and 27 forms of birds. Among the latter we find "Quails, 6 for the King." If he ate these as an after-thought from "roast beef," "boiled jiggits of mutton" and "burred pig," and before partaking of "Curlew pye," "hot Heron" and "pullets and grease," it augurs well for the vigour of the royal digestion.

This August Sunday of 1617 was Hoghton's high festival, long to be remembered in that country-side in all its doings. For many years its details would be lovingly recalled. The sermon might at last lose itself in the memory of other sermons, for such is the fate of a sermon; but that glorious dinner, that monumental supper, the majesty of the King, the shining coats of his lords and the wonder of the masking—these would remain. And the ends of the land were to hear something of that day's work at Hoghton, for at some time on this busy Sunday a petition was carried up to the King by Lancashire folk with a complaint that they were debarred by the harsh rule of magistrates and clergy from taking their lawful recreation upon Sunday and holy days after evening prayers. The cruel orders of the High Commission of 1579, which forbade Sunday piping and minstrelsy, Sunday bear-baiting and bull-baiting, the superstitious ringing of bells, drunkenness and gaming, rankled in their free Lancashire spirits, and the good cheer and good sport of Hoghton had brought their sovereign in a mind to redress some of their woe. The British Solomon was of opinion that papists and puritans must be infesting the country-side. He rebuked



THE DRAWING-ROOM.

the "Jewishly inclined" who would make a Sabbath of a Sunday, and gave his royal word in favour of such lawful recreation as dancing, archery, leaping and vaulting, May games, Whitsun ales and morice dances, the maypole, and the rush-decking of churches. Bear-baitings and interludes he would have none of, and the meaner sort were not to play at bowls in imitation of their betters. From this petition at Hoghton came next year's "Book of Sports," and from the "Book of Sports" arose some of that puritan opposition which was at last to have its stern way with maypoles and May games. Next day the King went away, but the merriment did not die down for his going. He



THE BANQUETING HALL—THE EAST END.



THE HALL AND GALLERY.



THE HALL—THE SOUTH WINDOW RECESS.

had hardly gone before "a man was almost slain with fighting," and Sir Richard led his neighbours the Asshetons and Sherbornes and Traffords down to his cellar, and drank kindly with everyone "in all manner of frindlie speake," until, as Nicholas Assheton has it in his diary, all in the cellar were "as merry as Robin Hood and all his fellowes." And all is not over with Monday's doings, for the diarist records on the Tuesday that "all this morning we plaid the Bacchanalians." Legend will have it that Sir Richard was a man of six-bottle capacity, so Nicholas Assheton sinned in good company. He was one of the local gentry who wore the livery, and he wrote down his impressions

Sir Gilbert died soon after, and his family were left to compound for their crippled estate with the Parliamentary Commissioners. His grandson, Sir Charles, stood by the old house and repaired it in some sort, as is shown by a stone with his initials, as well as by the panelling of the boudoir; but after his death, in 1710, the Hoghtons dwelt in their manor house of Walton, and the tower went slowly to decay, a farmer occupying a few rooms on one side of it.

Not until the days of the ninth baronet did the Hoghtons turn again towards their old home. Sir Henry Hoghton, who died in 1876, began to restore the house of his fathers, and, with mistaken archæology, "restored" his own



THE BOUDOIR.

With these great Jacobean days the short prosperity of the new tower of Hoghton ended. The next baronet, Sir Gilbert, was up for the King with many of his house. William Hoghton of Park Hall died a Colonel of Horse at the first battle of Newbury. Roger, the baronet's son, was slain by a cannon ball on Hessam Moor in 1643. Gilbert, the baronet, escaped from the storming of Preston; but Hoghton fell to Captain Starkie and his troopers, upon whom the house had its revenge, when a great gatehouse tower between the two courts was blown up by a fire among the powder barrels, killing Captain Starkie and some sixty of his men, or two hundred of them, as other accounts have it.

surname into "de Hoghton." In 1880 the work of restoration was so far advanced that Sir Charles de Hoghton, the tenth baronet, could come back again to be Hoghton of Hoghton Tower, and in the first year of the twentieth century Sir James de Hoghton was able to celebrate with a commemorative inscription at once the work's end and the coming of age of his heir.

The history of such a house in the future must run side by side with the history of the industrial North. It may be that in this corner of England the great industry has not yet eaten its fill, and that, ringed round with chimneys and factories, the lords of Hoghton will at last



THE KING'S HALL.

abandon lands which, grown to vast values by reason of the towns which hem them in, have yet lost the peace and sweet air which once made them pleasant and desirable. Even so the Traffords, after many centuries of ownership, have been driven from their ancient home at Trafford, and the like fate hangs over many Northern houses. Not the North alone is threatened, for Kent, on the Stock Exchange at least, has been a coal-bearing Black Country any time these ten years, and that Greater London which is Meaner London is still lapping up the green fields at its edges. When we consider these things we shall listen with an easier mind to those who prophesy to us day by day of the coming downfall of English commerce. The mills will be empty and the chimneys cold, the voice of the fly-wheel will be heard no more in the lands. Nature will leap back into her lost fields, the close timber of Hoghton Park shall spring again, to shelter once more the red deer in great plenty, the boars and the white and spangled bulls of the chronicle, noble sport for the X-ray shaft of the hunter who shall come over-sea from the crowded towns on the Zambesi banks to hunt in the silent forest that was Lancashire.

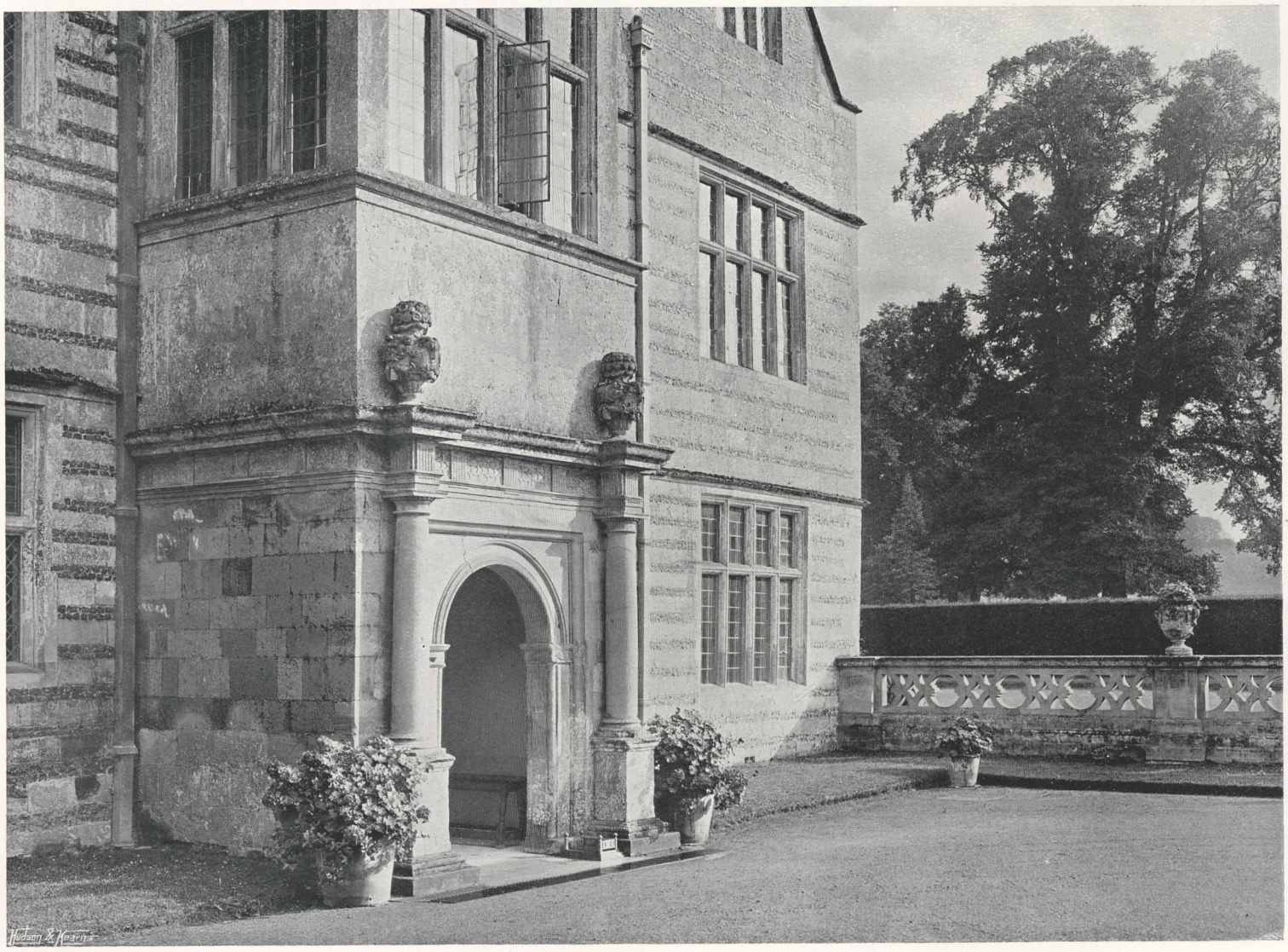


WEST END OF THE BOUDOIR.

STOCKTON HOUSE,

WILTSHIRE.

THE Bishop of Worcester's house in Wiltshire, which he inherited through his mother, the heiress of the old West Country family of Biggs, formerly spelt Bygges, is a specimen of the Elizabethan manor house, somewhat enlarged for modern uses, but keeping its old features, and much priceless plaster-work and panelling of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as a great deal of ancient furniture. In Domesday Book a Saxon lord is given as holding the place, and there are traces of Norman and later pre-Reformation work in the stone walls ; but it was enlarged and beautified by one of the woollen princes who made great fortunes out of the sheep farms on Salisbury Plain about the time when Protestant refugees brought their faith and their weaving skill to England. There are still families, such as the Flemings, among the cottagers of Stockton whose names show their Flanders origin. John Toppe in this way acquired great wealth, and enlarged the old house at Stockton. He continued a characteristic feature of this Wylye valley and of the whole chalk regions of Wiltshire by building his new work in layers of stone and black flint, and produced, though on a rather larger and more elaborate scale, almost the fellow-house to Lake, a few miles off on the other side of the plain. Inside he gave full play to his fancy in the plaster ceilings, which still remain in perfect condition, and are frequently sketched. The most remarkable of these is in the great drawing-room upstairs—one of the old Elizabethan galleries—a long, low room, with a minstrels' oriel over the main entrance, and



THE ENTRY.



WEST FRONT.



SOUTH-EAST ANGLE.



THE ENTRANCE HALL.

panelled with dark oak, the panelling giving way in the corner to a porched door within the room, on which figure strange portrayals of Mars and Venus and Juno.

John Toppe and Mary, his wife, whose initials appear in some of the other ceilings, passed away in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and lie buried under two fine recumbent effigies in the Biggs aisle of the church. Mary Toppe was buried at midnight with what seems to have been a very remarkable torchlight ceremony, and the service was followed by great gifts of money and food. She and her husband are said to have signified rather boldly, considering that Queen Bess was reigning, their attachment to the older forms of religion, by curious emblems signifying Catherine of Aragon, Mary Queen of Scots and the King of France, in conjunction



IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.



WINDOW OVER THE PORCH.

with an immense plaster panel over the fireplace of one of the rooms, depicting Shadrach and his companions in the fiery furnace, with a view of showing that the Toppes also were ready to suffer for conscience sake. Another remarkable room, hung with old Spanish leather, and containing a magnificent Italian sixteenth century bed with a canopy, is said to have been occupied by Queen Elizabeth ; it has her arms and initials on the ceiling, but those of James I. over the fire.

The staircase of 1802 takes the place of the old one of oak. This has the merits of its day, and was put up by Wyatt, the restorer of Windsor, who used to speak of it as his best small staircase. Descending this from Queen Elizabeth's



THE WHITE PARLOUR.

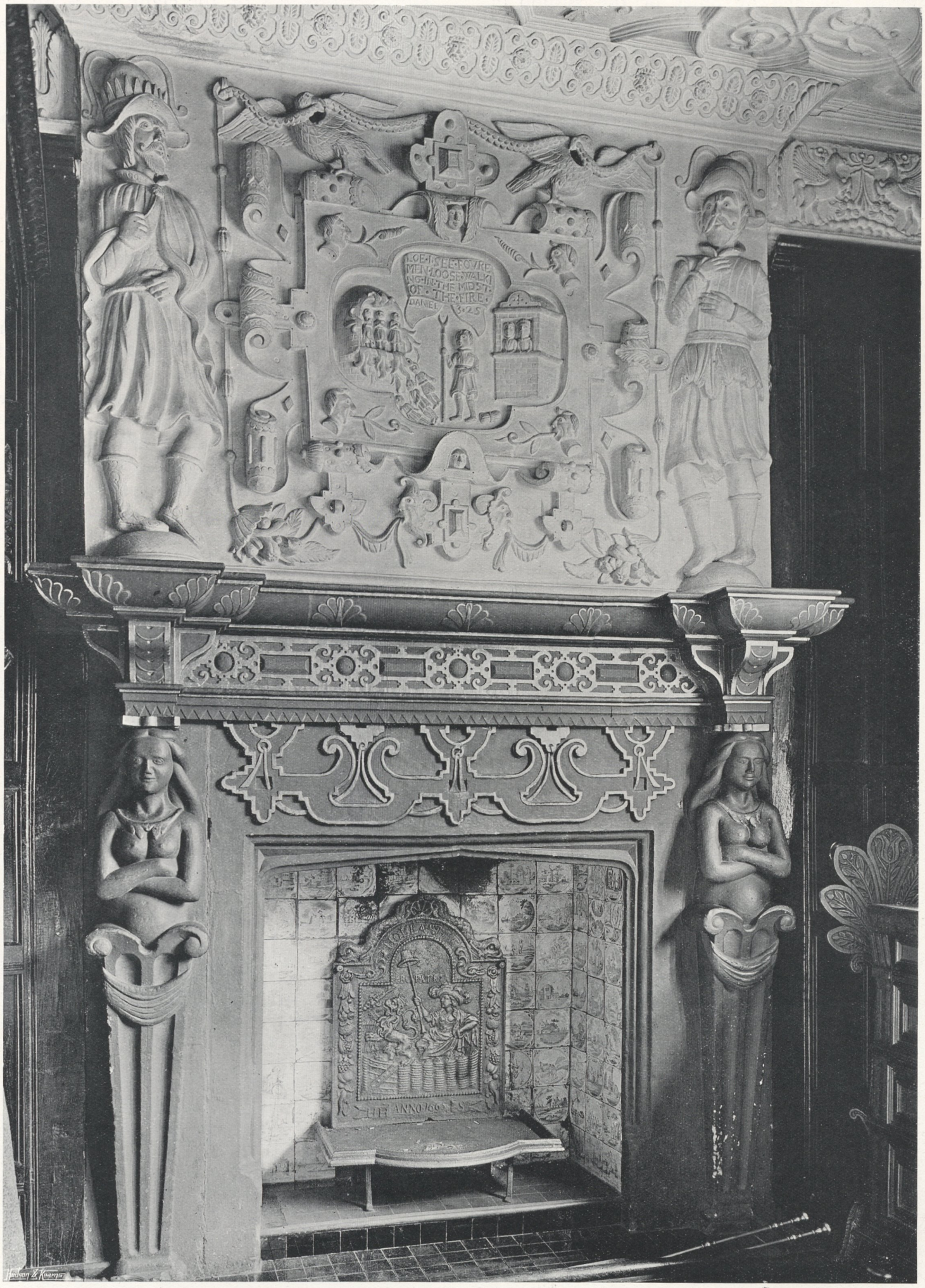


THE OLD DRAWING-ROOM.

room, the entrance hall is reached, a long, low, picturesque room with the front door in one corner, and on whose panelling are hung the assegais and other trophies of General Yeatman-Biggs, the Bishop's elder brother, from whom he inherited, and who did much to preserve and restore the old house. In the same hall is some armour worn by one of the family in the Commonwealth, also some of the muskets served out to the Mr. Biggs of the day, who raised a troop to serve in the defence of the South and West of England against Bonaparte. The gardens of Stockton House were first laid out in the reign of James II., and one of the old cypresses still remains; but the stone terraces adorned with Cæsar's heads, and an interesting overground



STONEWORK IN THE HALL.



SHADRACH ROOM.

outdoor cellar, surmounted by a stone figure of Bacchus, were removed by the Bishop's grandfather, according to the taste of his day, and many of the vases are still found placed about the gardens. Much of the beauty of the gardens is due to Mr. Ashley Dodd of Godinton in Kent, who at one time rented the house. In the church of a neighbouring village lies buried the wife of one of the Bygges who was a recusant. When she died she was buried in the chancel, only to be dug up ignominiously by orders from London. The next day her husband