NEWBURGH PRIORY,

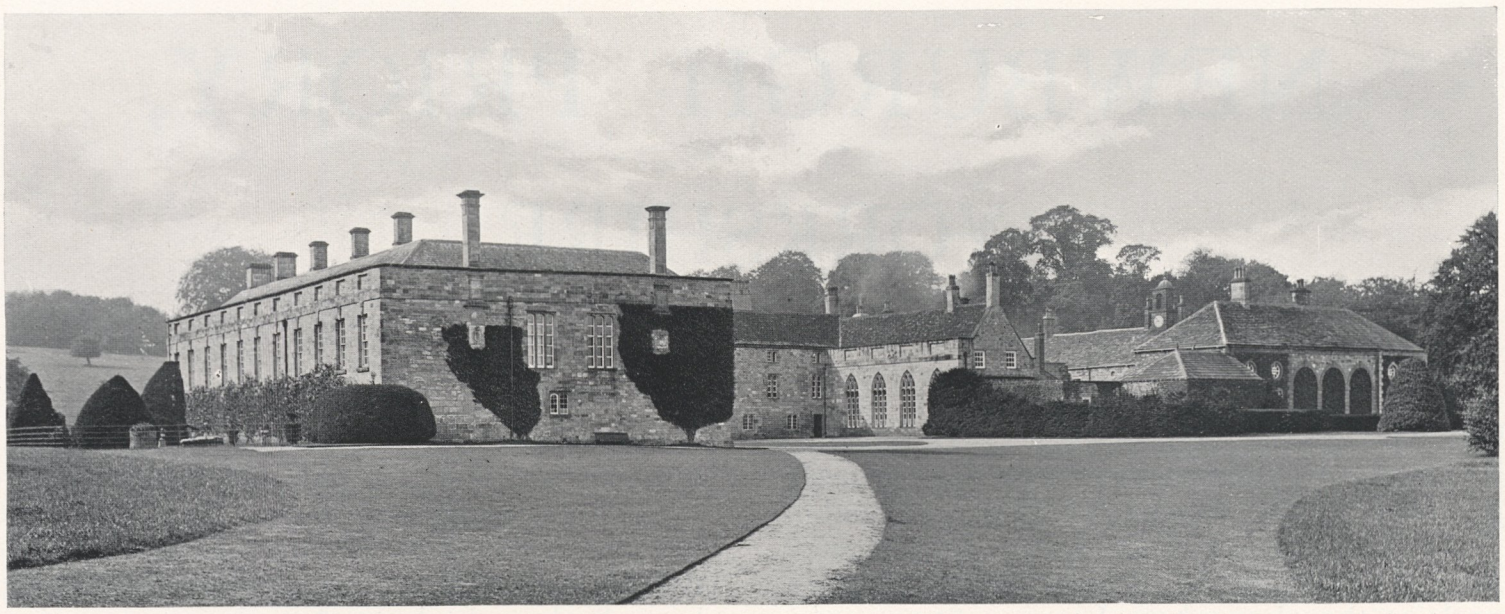
YORKSHIRE.

IN that goodly part of the ample shire of York which lies sheltered from the northerly blasts by the Hambledon Hills, and within a short distance of the quaint old village of Coxwold—ever to be famous in our literary annals as the place where Laurence Sterne completed "Tristram Shandy" and wrote "The Sentimental Journey"—stands that house of many interests in which Sir George Wombwell dwells. In this part of Yorkshire the great Norman baron Roger de Mowbray was installed, and his broad possessions extended far through that central region which is even now known as the Vale of Mowbray. It is a part of England which from those times to these has attracted many eminent personages by its rich and pleasant landscapes, and now within a few miles are found such great seats as Castle Howard, Duncombe Park and Gilling Castle. It was in this chosen region of hill and dale that the powerful nobles displayed alike their magnificence and their generosity, and the fair remains of Rievaulx, Kirkham and Byland, the last a near neighbour of Newburgh, bespeak the splendours of a glorious age of our English architecture.

Newburgh Priory was founded by Roger de Mowbray in 1145, and the greater Cistercian house of Byland came from the same generous hand. De Mowbray was one of the barons who fought in the Battle of the Standard, and his comrade in arms was Walter l'Espec, who founded both Rievaulx and Kirkham. Newburgh was an Augustinian foundation which continued up to the Dissolution, when the site was granted to Anthony Belasyse. He was chaplain to Henry VIII., and conveyed Newburgh to Sir William



FROM THE HIGH ROAD.



NORTH FRONT FACING THE LAKE.

Belasyse, Knight, son of his elder brother Richard, and Henry Belasyse, son of Sir William, was created a baronet by James I. in 1611. The second baronet, Sir Thomas Belasyse, who represented Thirsk in Parliament from 1597 to 1625 with some interruptions, was a strong adherent of the Royal cause, and fought at Marston Moor. He had been created, in May, 1627, Baron Fauconberg of Yarum, County York, being afterwards raised to a viscounty. To this period we trace the older features of Newburgh in the central part of the building, in the triple-staged porch, and in the leading features of the dining-room and of the old library. Viscount Fauconberg's loyalty to the Crown cost him dearly, for he had to compound for his estates in the sum of £5,012, which was a very much larger sum than that figure would represent in these days. His son Henry died in his lifetime, but left a son, Thomas, who was baptised in 1627, at Coxwold, and married Elizabeth, third daughter of Oliver Cromwell. The marriage took place in 1657, and her husband had a seat in Cromwell's Upper House. He was also a Councillor of State, and at one time Envoy to France. Assisted by his wife, he exerted himself to bring about the Restoration, and afterwards Countess Fauconberg frequently appeared in Court, her husband being raised to the earldom in 1689. Many memorials of Oliver Cromwell came through this marriage to Newburgh, where they are still greatly prized. Among them is a sword used by the Protector, having engraved upon its blade the words "Oliver Cromwell, General, for the English Parliament, 1652," while above it is the motto "Soli Deo gloria," and below it "Fide sed cui vide." Another of the relics is a broadsword of Cromwell's, and his saddle and horse-pistols are also preserved in the house with other valuable objects, including a gold watch which is associated with the great Protector. The Earl of Fauconberg left no son, but his nephew, Thomas Belasyse, succeeded to the viscounty, and the latter's son was raised in 1756 to the extinct earldom. From him the title and estates passed to his only son Henry, who sat in the Commons for Peterborough, was a great favourite with George III., Lord of the Bedchamber in 1777, and colonel of Fauconberg's Regiment of Foot. He died in 1802, leaving no son, but his descendant through his second daughter, Sir George Orby Wombwell, is the present possessor of the estate.

Such in brief has been the descent of Newburgh, which, in the hands of those who have possessed it, has been enlarged and altered. But



SOUTH FRONTAGES.



EAST OF SOUTH FRONT.

some of its most interesting rooms still bear the impress of the earlier half of the seventeenth century, and with such houses we are classing it. Yet it tells the tale of many changes of taste. Jacobean features contrast charmingly with more recent additions, constructed of the solid squared ashlar of pleasant hue, which is so frequently employed in the great houses of this part of England.



SOUTH END OF LONG GALLERY.

Some traces of the Priory church may be noticed between the north-east entrance and the fish-pond, and very many carved stones have been discovered, but, otherwise, there is little to remind us of the ecclesiastical origin of the place, except on the north side, where, much altered and refaced, the great windows of the kitchen betray their late Gothic origin, and the office building to the left of the kitchen has the depressed arch of the close of the fifteenth century in its mullioned windows of the same type as at Prinknash. Contrasting with this part is the great regular block, whose chief elevation is to the east, and which clearly dates from the days of Anne, while the south front has the bay windowed additions of the close of the eighteenth century, stretching forward and somewhat crushing the well-designed Jacobean porch.

Nowhere in England do we know a better kept estate than that of Newburgh in the hands of Sir George Wombwell. As we approach by the road from Coxwold we become aware that unusual care is bestowed on the surroundings. Broad grass borders, all well shorn, margin the highway, and there are hedges and quaint yews, and many other things to tell us that we are in the neighbourhood of a great domain. The fine avenue, the two lodges — very characteristic of Yorkshire — the noble iron gateway, the well-shaven lawns margining the approach, the finely-clipped yews, and indeed, all the details, are evidence of the exceeding care and skill devoted to the place. Ere we entered the place we noticed the high wall, the noble hedges and bee-hive yews of the kitchen garden. How many times did Laurence Sterne walk along that road from Coxwold, how often enter at that gate! For Newburgh has ever been the home of hospitality, and a great centre of life in that part of Yorkshire, where the lord lived beloved by his tenantry, and justice and bounty alike issued from his door.



PART OF THE DINING-ROOM.

There is a strange legend that all the oaks of Newburgh—for it is a land of oaks—were decapitated or shorn of their spreading boughs by order of Oliver Cromwell, and that only by this sacrifice could Fauconberg gain his daughter's hand; but now the mighty patricians bear no mark of such ravage, and the waving woods and fair glades of the park are there in glorious contrast to the more artificial parts of the grounds. What could be more beautiful than the rare and radiant gardenage of the south front, where multitudes of flowers gleam in their splendour, grouped with the well-clipped yew, the noble ornamental trees in tubs and boxes, the excellent examples of greatly dignify the interior. The mantel has finely-worked composite columns, and there are admirable figures of Diana and Apollo, with young bacchanals or amorini, and a central subject of Venus reclining. Brought hither from Venice by the first Earl Fauconberg, it savours of the style of the Restoration, as also do the magnificently-carved door-framings, while the recesses by the fire-place, the frieze below the ceiling, and other portions of the decorations must have been redone late in the eighteenth century. Of the fine Chippendale furniture, some chairs appear in the view, and the room also contains several notable pictures. The house is, indeed, famous



THE WHITE DRAWING-ROOM.

subdued topiary skill, and behind all this the lovely upland of the umbrageous park? Upon such a garden all will look with exalted satisfaction, but let them reflect that the tireless hand maintains it in its perfection. Here, in the ordered parts of the pleasaunce near the house, are no evergreens whose age forgets their early discipline, no riot of what Charles Dudley Warner has called the vegetable passions of ambition, selfishness, greed of place and satiety. All is controlled and directed by skilful and experienced hands.

Within, the great and spacious dining-room first attracts attention. Here the mantel with its fine carvings, and the unusual alcoves on either side of it, constitute a notable composition, and for its portraits, among them being Thomas, first Viscount Fauconberg, and Thomas, Earl Fauconberg, and his wife, Cromwell's daughter. The White Drawing-room is a splendid apartment of Queen Anne's day, with fluted Ionic columns, a beautiful ceiling and a lovely mantel-piece, above which hangs a portrait of Sir George Wombwell, presented to him by his tenantry in 1859. This room in decorative treatment reminds us of Beningborough, another Yorkshire house included in this volume, which was built in Queen Anne's time from Vanbrugh's designs. The elegant and graceful small drawing-room is also hung with interesting but older family portraits. There is much of interest also in the long gallery,



THE OLD LIBRARY.

with its beautiful chimney-piece of the eighteenth century set into the small panelling of the early seventeenth. While in the old library, now a billiard-room, and other apartments there are rich adornments, rare furniture, fine pictures and many objects of special interest giving the same distinction that rests on the beautiful exterior and surroundings of the house.

And now before we leave Newburgh something must be said about Coxwold, and the residence there of Laurence Sterne, who described himself as being "as happy as a prince at Coxwold, and I wish you could see in how princely a manner I live. 'Tis a land of plenty. I sit down alone to venison, fish, and wild fowl, or a couple of fowls or ducks; with curds, strawberries, and cream, and all the simple plenty which a rich valley under Hambledon Hills can produce. I have a hundred hens and chickens about my yard, and not a parishioner catches a hare or a rabbit or a trout, but he brings it as an offering to me."

Such was the picture of the life of that country parson who wrote his masterpieces in the cottages, which have been placed in repair by the care of Sir George Wombwell.

> See here Sterne's roadside home. As day expires
> Within that panelled room behold him sit,
> With long churchwarden pipe and scribbled quires,
> Himself scarce smiling at his light-born wit,
> Or, where the tears should flow, and cheek grow pale,
> Turning to shift his wig, or froth his ale.



CHIPPENDALE MIRRORS—WHITE DRAWING-ROOM.