BENINGBROUGH HALL, YORKSHIRE.

BENINGBROUGH in Yorkshire was, according to old tradition, a summering place of Northumbrian kings. Its parish is Newton-upon-Ouse, north-west of that city of York, whose foundations of religious orders were from ancient times enriched with Beningbrough lands. The priory of Nun Monkton had land here, so had the great abbey of St. Mary's, and Beningbrough Hall was once Beningbrough Grange, a house which harboured the bailiff of another York foundation, the hospital of St. Leonard. The master and brethren of St. Leonard's made a second park here, a jury of foresters assuring the King's escheator in 1284 that the Royal forest of Galtres would take no harm by the enclosure. When the religious houses were falling to the Crown, Thomas Magnus, the last master of the hospital, ran no risk of his neck by delaying submission, but surrendered the hospital and its lands to the most dread sovereign lord King Henry VIII. For his complacent loyalty provision was made for Master Magnus, who had a life grant of the Grange of Beningbrough with the Newton fishery. He was still holding these in 1544 when the King gave the reversion of Beningbrough Grange to one John Banister, a layman.

Here it would seem we have the key to the later history of Beningbrough Hall. The Yorkshire historians have neglected park and parish, but the story runs that Henry VIII. took Beningbrough Grange from the abbot of St. Mary's and gave it to John Bourchier, Lord Berners, in whose family it descended. But we have seen that the Grange was parcel of St. Leonard's Hospital lands, and that John Banister was the first layman to have the reversion. How



FACING SOUTH.

then did it come to the name of Bourchier, in which it stayed for two hundred years? The Bourchiers were a house of whom the fifteenth century chronicles have much to say. A judge began the line, as a judge about the same time began the great house of Howard. John Bourchier, the judge, married an Essex lady with a manor to her name, and begot Robert Bourchier, who in 1340 was the first layman Chancellor. Member of Parliament, justice and Chancellor, he could be soldier too in that age of soldiers, fighting at Crecy at the head of the many spears he led into France. The black death took him in 1349. After the fighting Chancellor come many Bourchiers who prosper greatly, although the Wars of the Red and White Roses thin them. The Chancellor's grandson had an oversea peerage as Earl of Eu in Normandy, and the Earl's son, married to Isabel, aunt of Edward IV., was Treasurer of



THE ENTRANCE HALL.



THE STAIRWAY.

England and Earl of Essex. Brother to the Earl of Essex was Thomas Bourchier, Cardinal and Archbishop of Canterbury, a peacemaking clerk of Lancastrian sympathies, whose fate it was to crown Edward IV., and, at the end of his long life, to close the quarrel of the Roses by marrying Henry Tudor to Elizabeth of York. Earls of Eu, of Essex, and of Bath, Lords FitzWarine and Berners, all these Bourchiers have now followed the most of the old lordly houses to the tomb. But at Beningbrough there was a Bourchier squire till 1768, a descendant of the Berners line. Youngest of the children of the Earl of Eu was John Bourchier, the Lord Berners. His son Humfrey was killed at Towton fighting for the white flower, and John the grandson succeeded. Happily for the young John Berners, he was born too late for civil fray. He lived to see something of war, but more of jousting and revelling. We figure him as one of those swaggering lords of Henry VIII.'s glorious Court, with the price of a manor rustling and glittering on his back. He had his share of Church land, yet died embarrassed, as became a man who had the good luck to be one of the shining company on the Field of Cloth of Gold. But he was more than a courtier, for his age's lettered taste was in him, and we still read his translation of Froissart's chronicle for the sake of the sounding English of the phrases. This was the man who founded the Beningbrough Bourchiers.



IN THE DINING-ROOM.

For his extravagance the Lord Berners must needs live his last thirteen years at Calais, where he was Lord Deputy. He left no son to succeed to his titles, but a young man-at-arms of the Calais garrison counted the Lord Berners his father, and one Elizabeth Becon his mother. Although he came irregularly into the world, the son of the Lord Deputy was a man of some note in Calais. He had a place found for him—lieutenant of the outlying castle of Ambleteuse—and a knight's daughter to wife, Mary, the daughter of Sir Humphrey Banister of Calais. She brought lands to found the new line of Bourchiers, being heir of her brother John, the John Banister who had the reversion of Beningbrough Grange after the death of Master Magnus; thus the Bourchiers came to Beningbrough.

Yorkshire landlords in a pleasant place, we hear no more of the Beningbrough Bourchiers until the time of John Bourchier, great-grandson of the Calais man-at-arms. His life we can trace fully enough. Succeeding his grandfather, Sir Ralph, at Beningbrough, we may take him as one of those men who find grievances and make



EAST DRAWING-ROOM.

enemies as they go. He early ran his head against place and power, speaking ill of the Lord Keeper, who had given a judgment against him, and for that offence the journals of the House of Lords show that he was censured and forced to make humble submission. A Yorkshire neighbour had small difficulty in quarrelling with that proud and querulous Strafford. Sir John Bourchier pulled down fences in the course of a country-side dispute and found himself in the plight of all those who opposed Strafford in his great day. Fined and imprisoned, his treatment was one of the charges brought against the great man when the pack was in cry against him. Sir John was in the Long Parliament for Ripon, and in December of 1648 he signed John Bourchier and affixed his seal of arms to no less a document than



THE DOUBLE CUBE.



WESTERN CORRIDOR

the warrant under which King Charles died before Whitehall. The very seal, with the Bourchier cross and bougets, is yet at Beningbrough. Such a well-affected knight had much honour in the days of the Commonwealth, sitting in the Council of State, and having a grant out of the lands of his old enemy Strafford. But he lived a thought too long, and, when the bells had done ringing for a Glorious Restoration, Sir John Bourchier of Beningbrough, knight, was summoned to surrender himself, with the survivors of those who had used quill and sealing-wax in that December of eleven years before. He showed himself bravely obstinate, and in the very shadow of the gallows stood by what he had signed and sealed. There were regicides in that day who whined, who protested that their fellows had bullied them to the deed; but Sir John stoutly stood by it. "I tell you," he said, "it was a just act: God and all good men will own it." So we may rejoice that death came to him while the two Houses were quarrelling their way through the list of names to be excepted from the Act of Indemnity. His son, Barrington Bourchier, had aided the Restoration, thereby saving the forfeit of Beningbrough.

Such an adventure fills one small family's history, and we have no more historical doings in this quarter. Barrington succeeded his father. The regicide's son was knighted by King Charles at Newmarket, and died. Two Sir Barrington Bourchiers followed him at Beningbrough, and two John Bourchiers, each a Sheriff of Yorkshire. The lands passed from the name when John Bourchier died at Bath in 1759, his daughter, Mildred, the wife of Robert Fox-Lane of Bramham, succeeding him. But Mrs. Lane died childless the next year, and the lands went back for eight years to a Bourchier, a London physician, who died at his suburban house in Hendon in 1768, leaving, as the magazines of his time record, all his great estates to his daughter Margaret, wife of Giles Earle. She survived her father nearly sixty years, and at her death, in 1827, Beningbrough Hall became by her will the property of the sixth Viscount Downe, grandfather of the present owner. Thus another ancient Yorkshire family, the descendants of the Dawnays of Cowick and Sessay, succeeded their distant kinsfolk the Bourchiers.



THE SMOKING-ROOM.

Old Beningbrough Hall, or Grange, was pulled down under Queen Anne, and reared again in a style of which we have, as yet, not given a complete example in this volume, although we have met work of the same kind in the



SECTION OF FRIEZE, WEST DRAWING-ROOM.

Newburgh drawing-room which dates from the same period. No feeling of the earlier Renascence time, of our Elizabethan and Jacobean work, remains at Beningbrough. New architectural forms, new decorative motifs have been drawn from the fountain head of classic art. The earlier interpretations drawn from Italian and Flemish sources had only modified and not destroyed mediaeval proportions and native ideas. Now Roman models are directly studied, and impregnate all our eighteenth century architects, whose effort is to obliterate the style natural to and adapted for Northern countries, so that many of the great Palladian palaces which became fashionable in England among the great territorial lords were decidedly more magnificent than comfortable. This is especially true of the greater creations of Sir John Vanbrugh; but Beningbrough, though built under his direction and having the full flavour of its period, cannot be called a characteristic work of the dramatist-architect, who persuaded our nobles to house



THE WEST DRAWING-ROOM.

themselves in whole quarries turned to ponderous temples. Here we have a habitable house, whose only sacrifice of utility to the tyranny of a foreign style and alien habits of life is the attempt to pretend there are no upper windows by sadly circumscribing their size and hiding them in between the huge cornice brackets



UPPER CORRIDOR.

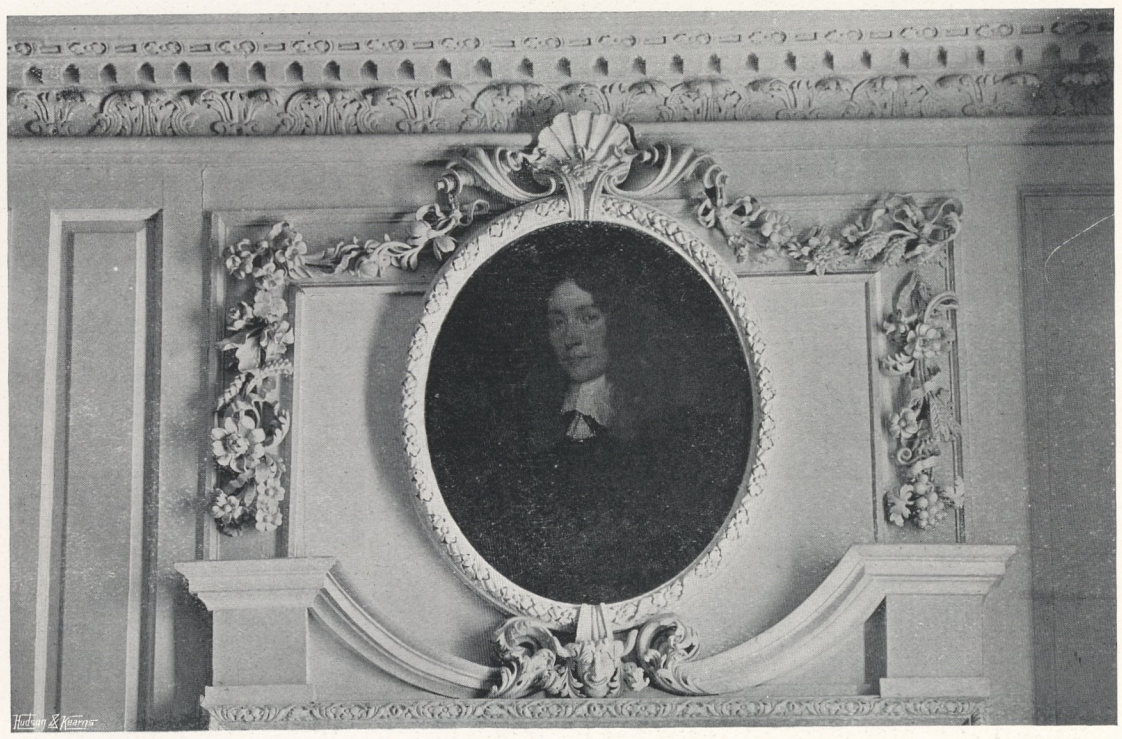
which seemed planned to support domes and pediments and cupolas rather than a humble, low-pitched roof.

The interior, however, decidedly deserves praise rather than criticism. There is an engaging dignity rather than a repellant grandeur about the general proportions and features of the rooms, their pilasterings and arcadings, their pediments and cornices, and a felicitous elegance rather than



A LOBBY.

a heavy exuberance about the details of ornamentation, which contrast favourably with much of Vanbrugh's more ambitious work. The whole scheme of the vaulted hall and stairway and corridors, and of the pillared and panelled drawing-rooms, with their fine wood-carving, is stately, yet liveable, while the character of the decoration, halfway between the style of Wren and Gibbons and the English adaptations of French Louis XV. work, is interesting as well as beautiful. Much pleasant and coeval furniture completes the picture, of which the very fine Chippendale glass which so exactly and agreeably occupies the large panel in the East Drawing-room is a noteworthy example. It is in the "Chinese" style, which began to be fashionable in Queen Anne's time, and reached the height of its popularity under George II. We have seen fine examples of



IN LADY DAWNAY'S ROOM.

such looking-glasses at Newburgh ; but the one at Welbeck, which we are about to describe, is still more characteristic and elaborate, as it takes the whole chimney-piece into its extravagant and restless design.

Lieutenant-Colonel the Hon. Lewis Payn Dawnay, who has his seat here, has sat in Parliament for Thirsk and for the Thirsk and Malton Division, and served in the Transvaal War, as did his eldest son.



EASTERN CORRIDOR.