



JOHN VANBRUGH, soldier and playwright, a clever, many-sided man, was much in vogue in London society during the last decade of the seventeenth century, when, besides being held an authority on the drama and on music, his opinions on architecture began to attract attention, and the Earl of Carlisle set him to make preliminary designs for the rebuilding of Castle Howard. It was probably a mutual interest in the opera that first brought the Manchesters and Vanbrugh together. But evidently the friendship was close, and Earl Charles was one of those who from the first was asked his opinion on the Castle Howard plans. This must have been in the early days of 1699, after the Earl had been on his first mission to Venice and before he left England again as Ambassador at the Court of Louis XIV. While he was abroad, Vanbrugh was one of his most gossiping correspondents, and in a letter he wrote in December, 1699, he not only gave London news, but spoke of his having been at Castle Howard during the summer and of having visited other great houses in the North—for instance, Chatsworth, where Talman was busy rebuilding for the Duke of Devonshire. The Duke had been shown the Castle Howard plans, which he had "absolutely approved." Many other critics had seen them during the autumn, no objection had been raised, and, says their author, "the model is preparing in wood, which when done is to travel to Kensington, where

the King's thoughts upon 't are to be had." This making of a model of an important building was by no means unusual then, and is now being much revived. Vanbrugh adds that the stone was already being raised and that the foundations would be laid in the spring. It would seem, however, that a delay afterwards occurred, for the Castle Howard building accounts do not begin till 1701.

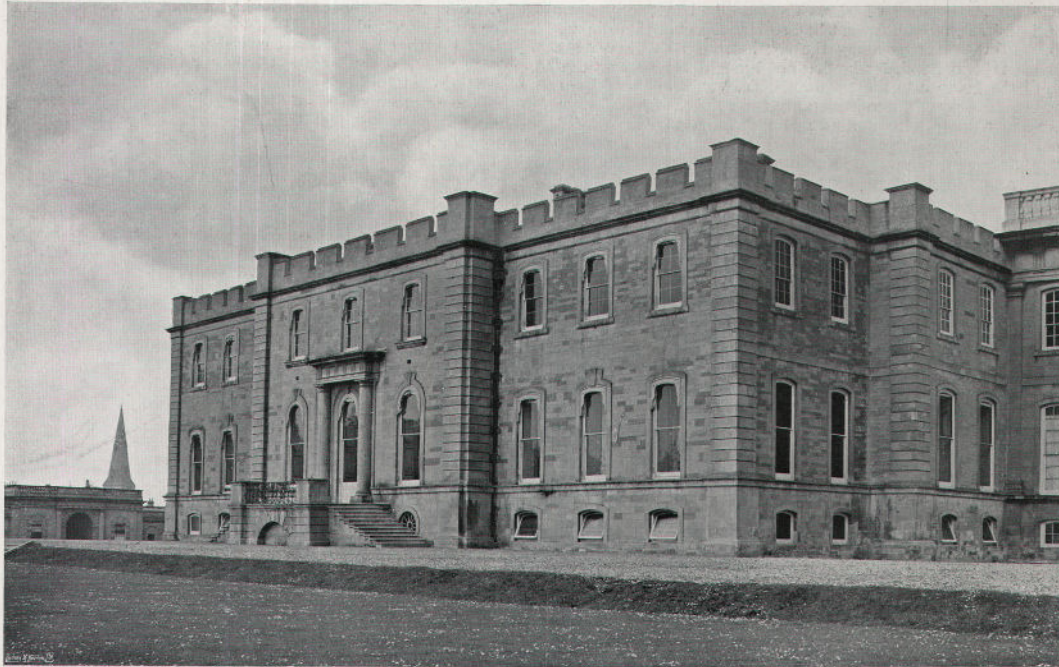
Earl Charles' first work at Kimbolton—that is, the new-building and refacing in the quadrangle and the redecoration of the great hall that were described last week—had no doubt been completed at an earlier date and without consultation with Vanbrugh. But in 1707, after the Earl had started on his second mission to Venice, part of the old house that abutted on the south end of the hall and formed the eastern portion of the south front appears to have collapsed. Something had to be done at once, and plans were got out by one Coleman, a name which has not survived in our architectural annals. It is the Countess who must have gone to him in the absence of her Lord, and under such circumstances she would be likely to go to the man who had already been concerned in such work at Kimbolton. Nothing then is more likely than that it was this Coleman who had effected the alterations in the quadrangle. The Countess, however, had no great confidence in him, and therefore also appealed for advice to Vanbrugh, whose reputation



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THE GATES ON THE ST. NEOTS ROAD;

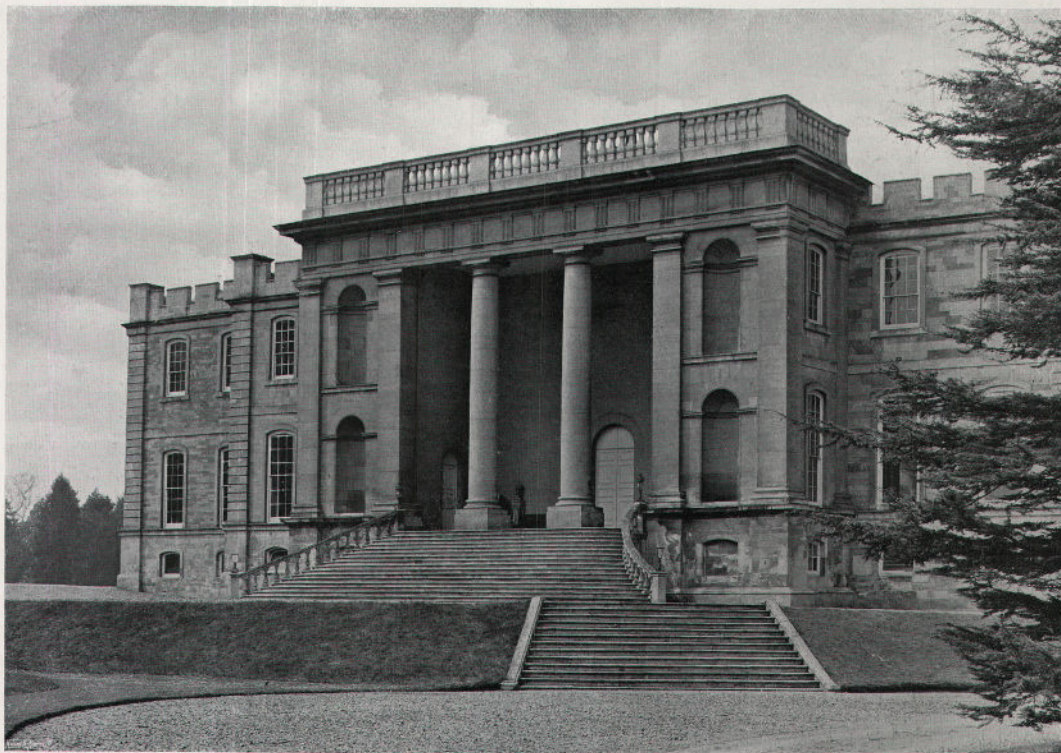
"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE SOUTH FACADE.

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THE GREAT EAST PORTICO.

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was then established, Castle Howard being well in progress and Blenheim begun. So in July, 1707, Vanbrugh travels down to Kimbolton, and soon afterwards sends a report on the whole matter to Earl Charles. Coleman had evidently been afraid of doing too much, and had so far respected the original arrangement of rooms along the south front as to leave his design unsymmetrical, for he had not brought the door on this side of the house into the middle. This, Vanbrugh would not for a moment permit, and he was certainly right. At that time there lay a large extent of formal gardening with a central canal in front of the south side, and it was important to get house and garden into one scheme—a well-marked central doorway and a flight of steps linable with the canal. So Vanbrugh, in his grand manner, determined that in the middle of this front he must build “a large noble room of parade,” and although we notice from the correspondence that Earl Charles did not want it, and considered that one great room, namely, the existing hall, was enough for the house and sufficient for his not enormous purse, Vanbrugh had his way, and an illustration of the room he built, as well as a detail of his mantel-piece, are among the accompanying illustrations.

A series of letters written by the architect in England to his client at Venice is printed in the second volume of “Court and Society,” and sheds much light not only on the rebuilding

August Vanbrugh goes down, finds the new walls six or seven feet high, and declares with delightful self-satisfaction, “I liked mighty well what was done, and Coleman owned he began to discover a gusto in it that he had no notion of before. I shall be much deceived if people do not see a manly beauty in it when it is up, that they did not conceive could be produced out of such rough materials; but it is certainly the figure and proportions that make the most pleasing fabric, and not the delicacy of the ornaments, a proof of which I am in great hopes to show your Lordship at Kimbolton.” The point was that, to save expense, the stone of the old fabric was being used over again. This, and the need of economy combined with the traditions of the place and the appearance of the other sides of the house which it was not then intended to alter, had made Vanbrugh decide that it was “absolutely best” to give his new building “something of the Castle air,” which clearly, to his mind, meant walls unadorned and surmounted with the thin and unconvincing battlementing that takes the place of the usual classic parapet. But he was a little nervous about this, and wrote to Earl Charles that Hugh May had followed the same course at Windsor thirty years before, and that it had been “universally approved.” “So I hope your Lordship will not be discouraged if any Italian you may show it to, should find fault that it is not Roman: for to have built a front with



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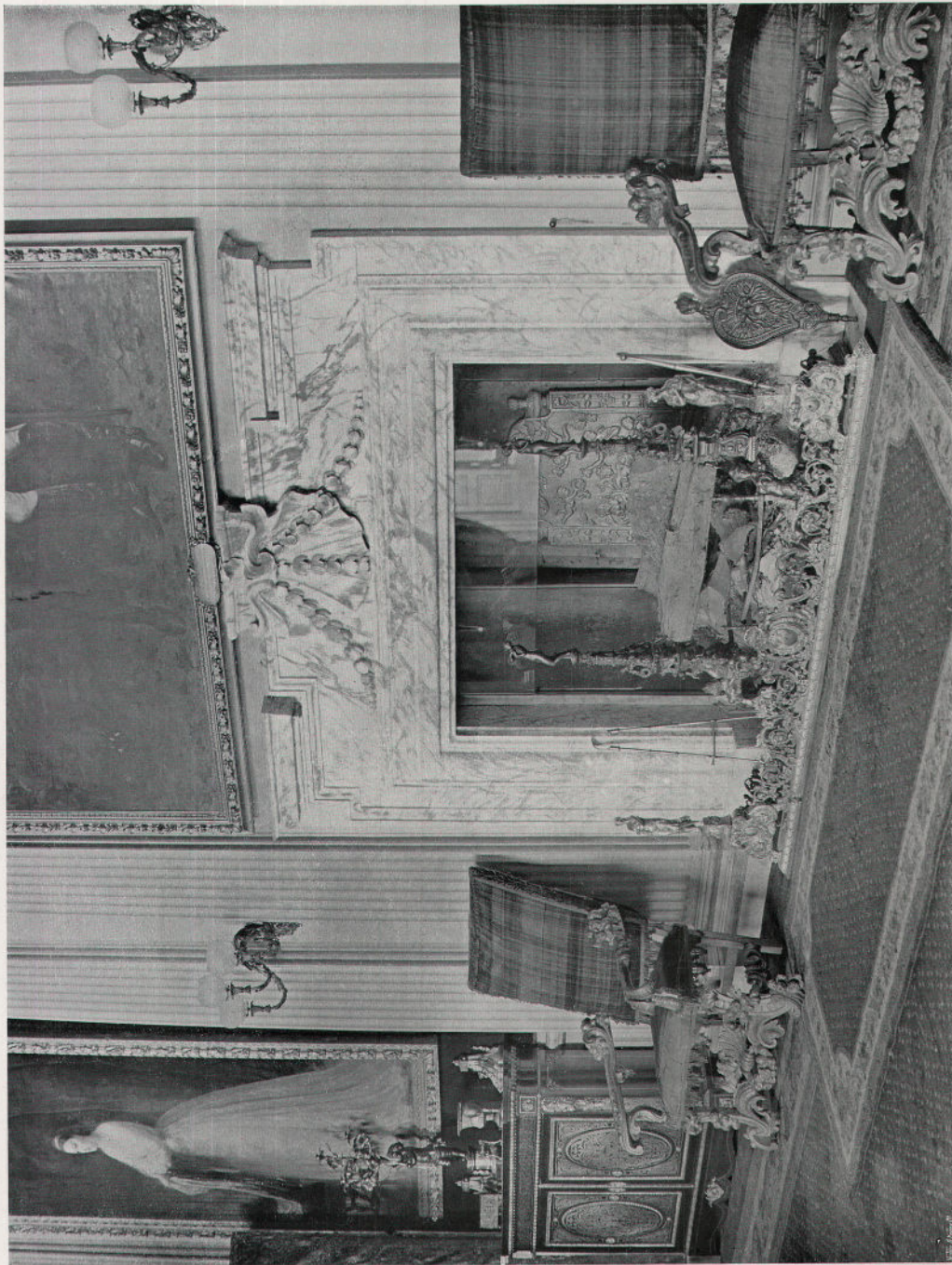
THE GATE HOUSE, BY ROBERT ADAM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

of Kimbolton, but on Vanbrugh's position and methods. He was a society man, he was running an opera house in London, he had various outlets for his energy and talents besides the numerous architectural works committed to his care or on which his opinion was asked. Coleman was, therefore, continued as sub-architect or superior clerk of the works, and he fulfilled that position so well that Vanbrugh gets more and more delighted with him and declares that “if we had such a man at Blenheim he would save a thousand pounds a year.” Does not this help us to understand the position of William Wakefield, of whom Francis Drake in his “Eboracum” says that his “great skill in architecture will always be commended as long as the houses of Duncombe Park and Gilling Castle shall stand”? The remodelling of Gilling Castle and the building not only of Duncombe, but of Beningborough, are attributed to Vanbrugh. All three are in the neighbourhood of Castle Howard, where, from the year 1699, he was for long a constant visitor as chief architect of that great house. Lord Carlisle would have introduced him to his neighbours, and they may well have asked him, if not to make designs for their houses, at least to overlook and alter those of the local architect, who would be in constant attendance on the buildings committed to his charge, as Coleman was at Kimbolton. There, work was begun early in the summer of 1707, and in

plasters and what the orders require, could never have been done with the rest of the Castle.” The rest of the castle meanwhile remained fit for occupation, and the Countess and her children were frequently there.

Both building and fighting were operations which in those days were pretty much stopped by the winter. But in the following March Vanbrugh goes down again to “settle everything to be done in the summer.” The previous autumn had not been wasted, and he found the building much advanced since his August visit. The new rooms “are almost up to the ceiling, and will be perfectly as one would wish them, and big enough of all conscience. The first of 'em, which is in the place of the old drawing-room, is rather bigger than the bow-windowed one, and the saloon beyond it is almost as big as the hall, and looks mighty pleasantly up the middle of the garden and canal, which is now brimful of water and looks mighty well. The respective hedges will be in great perfection this year, and the fruit trees are now strong enough to produce in abundance.” In August, 1708, he is again down, and finds “the east end is up to the battlements, and the west end is not much behind it; the timbers of the roof are raised upon 'em both.” Earl Charles, however, was then on his way home, the correspondence ceases, and we have no details of when the south front was finished or when Vanbrugh persuaded the Earl to rebuild the other



"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE SALOON MANTEL-PIECE.

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sides in like fashion, and perhaps also add the decidedly more "Roman" portico which stands forth from the facade of the white hall, and has a noble segmental stairway down to the terrace. It has all the bigness that Vanbrugh loved, and is even more serious than his usual designs, for the Doric order is alone permitted. There is no doubt that Vanbrugh had from the first intended to persuade his client to bring the other elevations into harmony with the new south front, for while he was engaged on this and wrote in its praise to the Ambassador, he added, "I apprehend but one thing from the whole, which is that your Lordship will two or three years hence find yourself under a violent temptation to take down and rebuild (suitable to this new front) all the outside walls round the Castle." The expectation was certainly realised, but whether as early as the architect anticipated does not appear. Very likely it was so, as a period of leisure was at hand for Earl Charles, who was out of office and lived in considerable retirement during the Tory Administration that closed Queen Anne's reign. He was thus one of the Whigs who looked for some reward from the Hanoverian dynasty, and George I. made him

portrait of the first Earl in armour, framed, no doubt, in one of the "large frames" of the 1687 inventory. It was carefully designed for its purpose, its elaborate openwork being set with coats of arms and groups of weapons. Here, too, is a Charles I. by the same hand. For the rest, the red damask walls are hung with pictures which Earl Charles collected or had painted for him when on mission to Venice. They are mostly excellent copies of well-known masterpieces of that school. Next we reach the green drawing-room, which faces south, and here we find one of the few renewals that it has been thought necessary to effect at Kimbolton. The damask on its walls being in tatters, it was copied in Italy and the walls rehung. It was from Italy, no doubt, that the original damask came, together with much other material forming hangings and furniture coverings at Kimbolton. Indeed, it was not for himself only that the Ambassador obtained such while on his second mission to Venice, for in a letter which Duchess Sarah of Marlborough addressed to him from Windsor Castle on August 1st, 1708, we read: "You have had the goodness to give yourself more trouble in my small affairs than I thought it possible for a man



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THE SALOON.

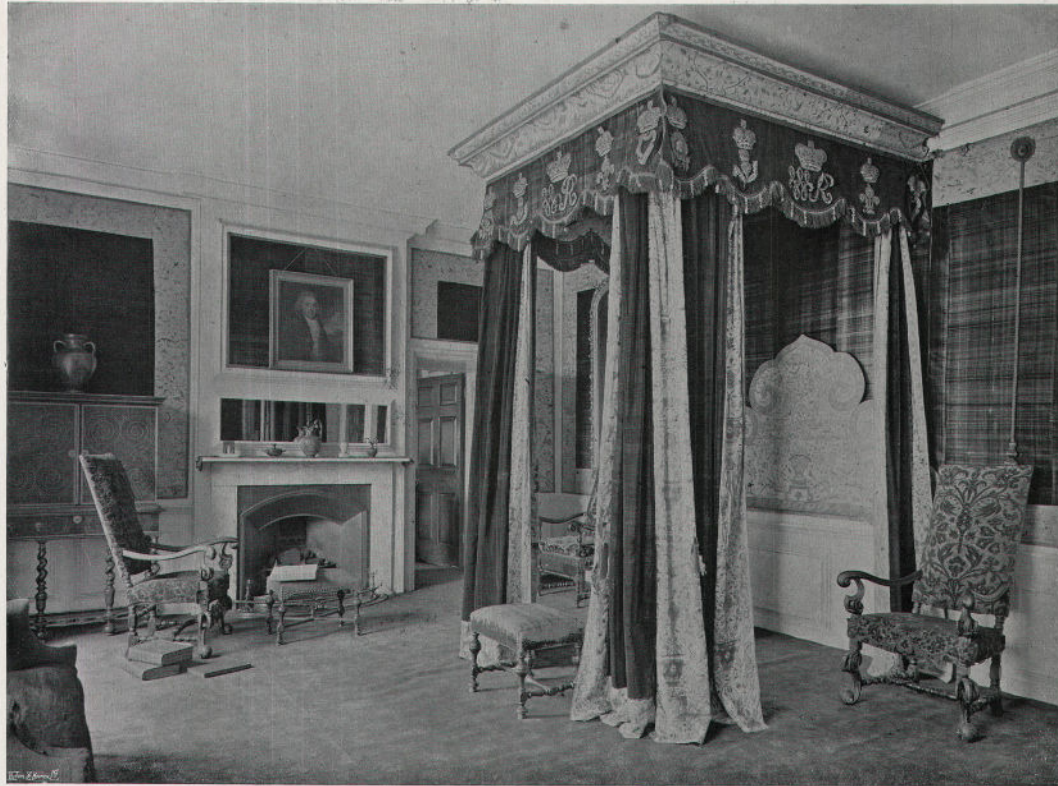
"COUNTRY LIFE."

a Bedchamber Lord in 1714 and set the strawberry leaves on his brow five years later.

Since that day seven Dukes have come and gone, but Kimbolton remains very much the same as the first of the series—whom we have hitherto called Earl Charles—and Sir John Vanbrugh left it. The old haphazard and irregular plan of the house which Queen Catherine occupied and the first Earl of Manchester had modified then gave way to a set of symmetrical elevations, and to a suite of great reception-rooms occupying the east and south sides and opening into each other. The white hall was permitted to retain its original shape and its William III. decorations. But the great portico was set against its east wall, so that that section of the outer elevation might be brought into line with the rest. The double doors at the north end of the white hall illustrated last week open into the great dining-room, over the mantel-piece of which a full-length portrait of Oliver Cromwell reminds us that he and the second Earl fought side by side in the early days of the Civil War. We pass through a similar doorway at the south end of the white hall to enter the red drawing-room. Here is Van Dyck's

to do, and are more particular and exact than ever I met with anybody in my life. I wish I may have an opportunity of returning the favours I have received from you; for indeed I have a very good will to do so, but for my ability I can't very much. I desire your Lordship will be pleased to give directions for to have made the quantity of damasks and velvets that I have put down, in English measure—of the green damask, 1,300 yards; yellow damask, 600 yards; crimson damask, 600 yards; scarlet plain velvet, 200 yards; plain blue velvet, 200 yards; scarlet damask, the same colour as the velvet, 100 yards; scarlet satin, 200 yards; blue satin, same colour as the velvet, 100 yards; blue damask, same colour as the velvet, 200 yards." These quantities help one to realise the vast size of Blenheim, which Vanbrugh then had in hand, as well as his more modest job at Kimbolton.

The walls of the green drawing-room are mainly hung with family pictures, notably that of the fourth Duke's wife by Reynolds. But we also find here some delightful and interesting historical portraits by Holbein—little panels about nine and a-half inches by twelve inches—as to which we read in



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KING WILLIAM'S BEDROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

"Court and Society," "this collection of Queen Catherine's kinsmen and associates has been at Kimbolton time out of mind." To her they probably belonged, and are the only remaining visible traces of her stay.

From the green drawing-room we pass into the saloon, of which we read so much in Vanbrugh's letters. Here we find his favourite scheme of fluted Corinthian pilasters and columns. The latter jut forward from the east and west ends, dividing the ceiling scheme into two—an arrangement which was probably necessitated by the fact that the saloon is deeper than Vanbrugh's new south building, and that its northern portion was taken out of an old but retained part. In the centre of this side is a very adequate and satisfying mantel-piece—big and bold in Vanbrugh's manner, but without the coarseness and eccentricity to which he was occasionally liable. It is of white grey-veined marble, and is nine feet wide and over seven feet high.



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DETAIL OF KING WILLIAM'S BED.

"C.L."

It depends almost entirely upon its form and mouldings for effect, but has as a central ornament a great shell more than two feet across, from which depend swags of the husk motif. Portraits of great size occupy the few wall spaces, conspicuous among them being Earl Charles' wife by Kneller. Over the mantel-piece hangs the picture of the sixth Duke presented to him by his volunteers in 1866, two years after he had published "Court and Society." West of the saloon are the rooms still called Queen Catherine's, though they were cast into the same mould as the rest of the suite by Vanbrugh. The south-west corner of the house is occupied by a little boudoir that shows a later touch, for though its coved ceiling is painted in the Verrio manner and it has a Queen Anne fireplace, over the latter we find a very elaborate gilt mirror in the Chinese manner of Chippendale. Behind the boudoir and facing west is the chapel, and here, as well as on the staircase, we

find the walls or ceilings decorated with painted scenes, as in the boudoir. Earl Charles had intended such treatment for the saloon and drawing-rooms, and engaged a painter in that manner to come home with him from Venice for the purpose. But Vanbrugh objected that a height of eighteen feet was insufficient for such treatment and proposed to "set him to work upon the hall." For some unknown reason this was not done, but the boudoir, staircase and chapel no doubt reveal his brush. The charm of the chapel lies in the gallery which runs along two sides of it. The narrow part is lit by windows facing west, and has arches looking down into the body of the chapel where the chaplain conducted the service and the retainers worshipped, while the family occupied the broad southern section of the gallery. The back wall is lined with bookcases well filled with ancient folios, in front of which stands a noble row of gilt armchairs that match, in their red brocade coverings, the cushions that are laid along the twenty-foot



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A BACK STAIRCASE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

length of the reading-desk.

Most of the Kimbolton bedrooms have been at one time or another redecorated and refurnished. But the King's room retains much of the appearance it presented when prepared for William III.'s occupation. The bed itself must have been a movable framework on which lay the mattresses, and it has been removed. But the great canopy and its curtains are there. The valance is heavily embroidered in gold, with the Royal crown repeated fifteen times over either the initials of the King or the emblems of England, France, Scotland and Ireland. Above this, the bold cornice of moulded wood is covered in white silk, finely embroidered in what was then called the Indian manner, that is, patterns taken from the stuffs, papers and lacquered panels imported from China by the East India Company. The curtains, of the same fine red silk velvet as the valance, are bordered with wide stretches of the same embroidery. A large, specially shaped expanse of the latter



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IN THE CHAPEL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

stands above the dado and forms the back of the bed. All this is delightful; but more interesting still is the continuation of the same two materials in panels all round the walls of the room, the silk velvet being bordered with the embroidery just as in the curtains. Chairs, stools and a cabinet of the same date form the furniture of the room. But Kimbolton, as the various illustrations have shown, is so rich in furniture of the days

beautiful Italian marble vase most just in proportion to its pedestal. The other illustration gives a presentment of the fine wrought-iron gates that open from the grounds on to the St. Neots Road. The pier to the left shows the dire action of ivy—most treacherous of growths. A few years of oversight allowed it to seize upon the top of the pier in octopus fashion, and though it has now been cut, the ruin it brought about is clearly visible. The gates themselves and the stonework of



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THE CHAPEL GALLERY.

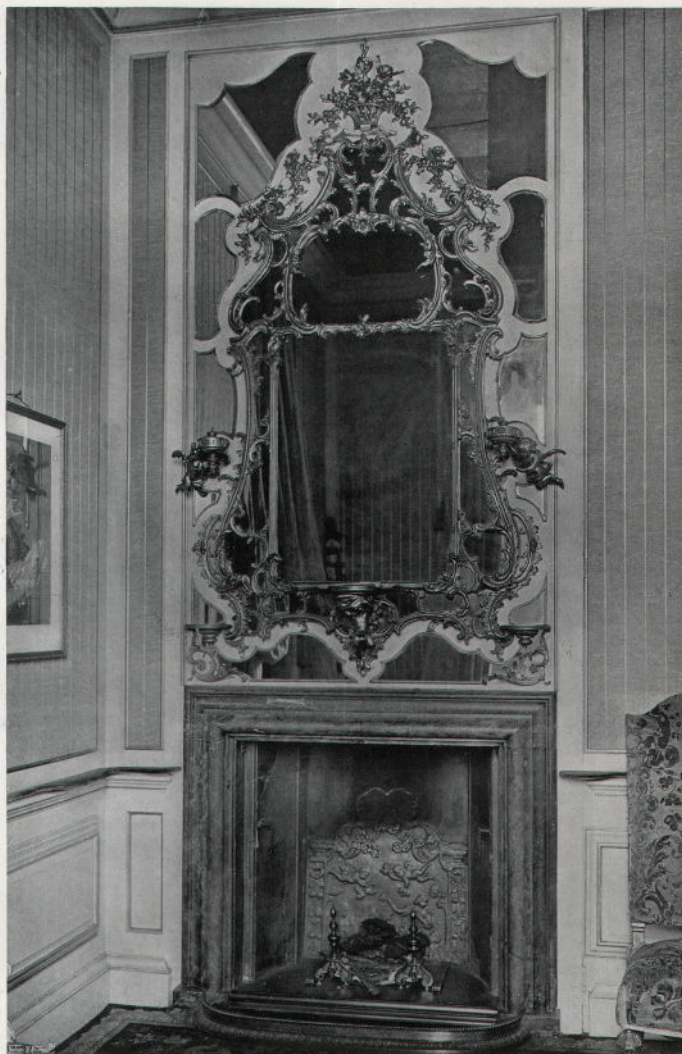
"COUNTRY LIFE."

of Charles, William and Anne that it will have to be separately considered.

Enough has now been said to show how universally Earl Charles, before he became a Duke in his last years, set his mark upon the home of his ancestors. But to pile up evidence of this, two further illustrations are given. The one is of a delightful subsidiary staircase painted white and having twisted balusters and a great square newel-post, on which stands a

the piers and flanking doorways are in the early eighteenth century manner. But the medallions and swags which ornament the frieze of the piers remind one that Robert Adam was employed to design additions to Kimbolton by the fourth Duke. He, like his grandfather before him, represented his Sovereign at the Court of Versailles, and, also like him, desired to be a builder. His ideas and ambitions, however, were somewhat greater than consorted with his means, for Wraxall describes

him as "of manners affable and corresponding with his high rank, but his fortune bore no proportion to his dignity." Thus more was planned than was performed, and there is no trace of some of the more elaborate of Adam's designs, such as the decorative scheme for the dining-room. But among the architect's drawings preserved in the Soane Museum we find two for a gatehouse—one in what Adam conceived was the "Gothick taste" and one in classic style. The latter represents the extensive architectural composition with central archway that screens the forecourt from the town street. The massive rusticated coigning around its principal windows is such as Vanbrugh rather than Adam loved, and gives the idea that the later architect wished his work to be in the spirit of the man who had done so much at Kimbolton in Queen Anne's time. The drawings for the gatehouse are not dated, but will be contemporary with those for the dining-room decorations, which bear the date 1766. The designs for the stables appear in the same series, but, on the whole, the visitor leaves Kimbolton with the impression that it is the home of "Earl Charles," as he made it, furnished it and left it, that he has been privileged to see.



Copyright IN THE BOUDOIR CALLED QUEEN CATHERINE'S. "C.L."

## IN THE GARDEN.

### BULBOUS AND TUBEROUS PLANTS.

**A**MONG those plants which may be fairly classed under the above heading we find some of the most beautiful of our flowers. Not only does the outdoor garden, during the greater part of the year, owe much of its charm and beauty to these kinds of plants, but our greenhouses and dwelling-houses would be devoid of much of their interest were bulbous or tuberous flowers omitted. Although the cultivation of a few genera is fairly well understood and generally undertaken on a more or less comprehensive scale, there are many families which the average gardening enthusiast has never heard of, or, if he has, the erroneous ideas which are prevalent concerning the difficulties to be encountered in growing them have deterred him from making the attempt. Yet in bulbous and tuberous plants there is a wealth of floral beauty such as we find in few other plants, beauty that is as yet comparatively neglected. In how many gardens, for instance, do we find the beautiful Belladonna Lilies, the dainty little Zephyranthes candidans, the Calochorti, Brodiaeas, or the Colchicums and Crocuses that flower in autumn? Yet all are delightful flowers, full of an indescribable charm that appeals

to every flower-lover, and all are comparatively easy to cultivate.

To an even greater extent are the bulbous and tuberous flowers of our greenhouses neglected. The beautiful little Cape Cowslips, or Lachenalias, Nerines, Crinums, Gloriosas, Gesneras, Achimenes, Oxalis, Hymenocallis and Pancratiums are a few kinds that come to mind which are only to be met with in few houses in this country, yet all are beautiful and some of them delightfully sweet.

Apart from the value of these little-known bulbous or tuberous plants as they now exist, it is not being too sanguine to think that they hold enormous possibilities for the ardent hybridist. Years ago the cultivation of these comparatively rare plants was undertaken by a few enthusiasts in this country, and owing to their efforts some progress was made in popularising the plants; but in the modern craze for plants that demand little or no skill on the part of the cultivator they have been sadly neglected. It is on this account that one welcomes the large and comprehensive "Bulb Book," by John Weathers (Murray, 15s. net), which

will undoubtedly do much towards re-creating an interest in these plants and induce many to take up their cultivation. In several respects the author has given us a unique book, a cultural dictionary to every plant, or family, that can fairly be classed under its comprehensive sub-title, as well as a botanical classification and a clear description of the botanical differences between bulbs, tubers, corms and rhizomes. These parts of the book are particularly well illustrated, and although the cultivator may not think it of very great importance to distinguish the difference between the several types, the ardent student and lover of flowers will welcome such lucid information.

As indicative of the wealth of flowers that belong to one or the other of the sections, we may mention that no fewer than fifty natural orders, comprising four hundred genera, are described. As one would expect, the more important families, such as Lilies, Irises, Narcissi, Gladioli and Tulips, are dealt with more fully than those of lesser interest; but the most valuable feature of all is to be found in the short yet lucid cultural details given for the lesser-known kinds. The author, in the chapter headed "Contractile Roots," makes one curious mistake, a mistake that must have been due to forgetfulness. To quote him, "It is well known, however, that neither corms nor bulbs, no matter how many years they have been in the soil, ever come through the ground." Mr. Weathers must, in common with many other cultivators, have had occasion from time to time to cover his bulbs of *Lilium candidum*, which will always endeavour to push their way through the soil in search of the