



**T**HE reputation of an artist is often an affair of accident. Though history rights itself in the long run, men have owed their eminence to fortunate circumstance or adroit advertisement, and architects are more particularly liable to these caprices of fame, inasmuch as their works are stationary—that is, they cannot be exhibited in galleries, and their merits or demerits have to be taken on faith. Such a building, for instance, as the old Bethlehem Hospital, or the Town Hall at Abingdon, would not have disgraced the architect of Chelsea Hospital. Yet the names of their designers are unknown, and some of by no means the least attractive buildings of the eighteenth century are by unknown men.

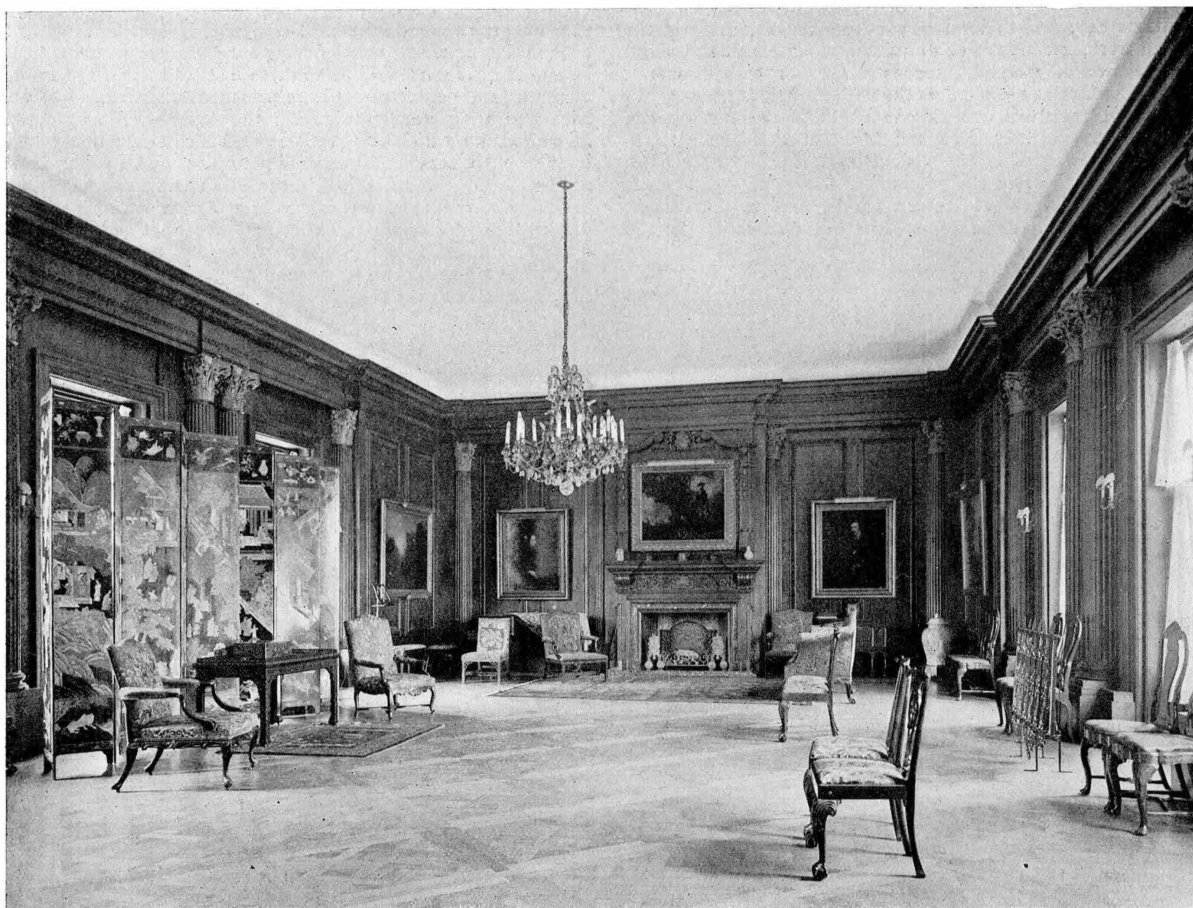
Thus Sir Reginald Blomfield in his "History," and true as it is of many houses belonging to the greater periods of domestic architecture, it applies multitudinously to houses of the nineteenth century. The latter, however, are of far less consequence, since so many of these houses, especially those produced during the second half of the century, were merely deplorable specimens; and it is therefore merciful to the memory of their architects that, though the houses remain, their authors' names have gone into limbo.

The account of the house with which we are now concerned begins with Victorian days. It would seem to have been a house of the 'forties, when things were going to the dogs, but had not yet reached the consummation that was achieved two

or three decades later. The house stood on a piece of high ground at Townhill, a couple of miles to the north-east of Southampton. It was a four-square house, with cement pilasters running up from ground to eaves level, and having on the side overlooking the garden a pair of bay windows of that roomy, dull kind which was characteristic of the period. This house was acquired by the present Lord Swaythling in the years before the war. The intention then was to extend it from one end in order to provide additional accommodation, and so make it serve as a small country house. Mr. L. Rome Guthrie was the architect commissioned to carry out the work. A scheme was prepared and proceeded with, but when it was well on the way to completion, certain events occurred which demanded a drastic alteration; in particular, more bedrooms were demanded, and in due course were provided; and at a little later date the architect was called upon to work out a second scheme of reconstruction and addition. But the advent of the war put an end to this project, and it was not till 1920 that it was taken up again, and brought to completion in 1922. In this way the little dull house of the 'forties has been transformed into a country house of considerable size.

In studying any architectural work, and especially in studying a house which has been altered and enlarged in the manner just indicated, it is essential to a proper estimate that one should know why certain things were done, and under what





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2.—MUSIC ROOM FROM THE ENTRANCE END.

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3.—LOOKING ACROSS THE MUSIC ROOM FROM THE FIREPLACE END.

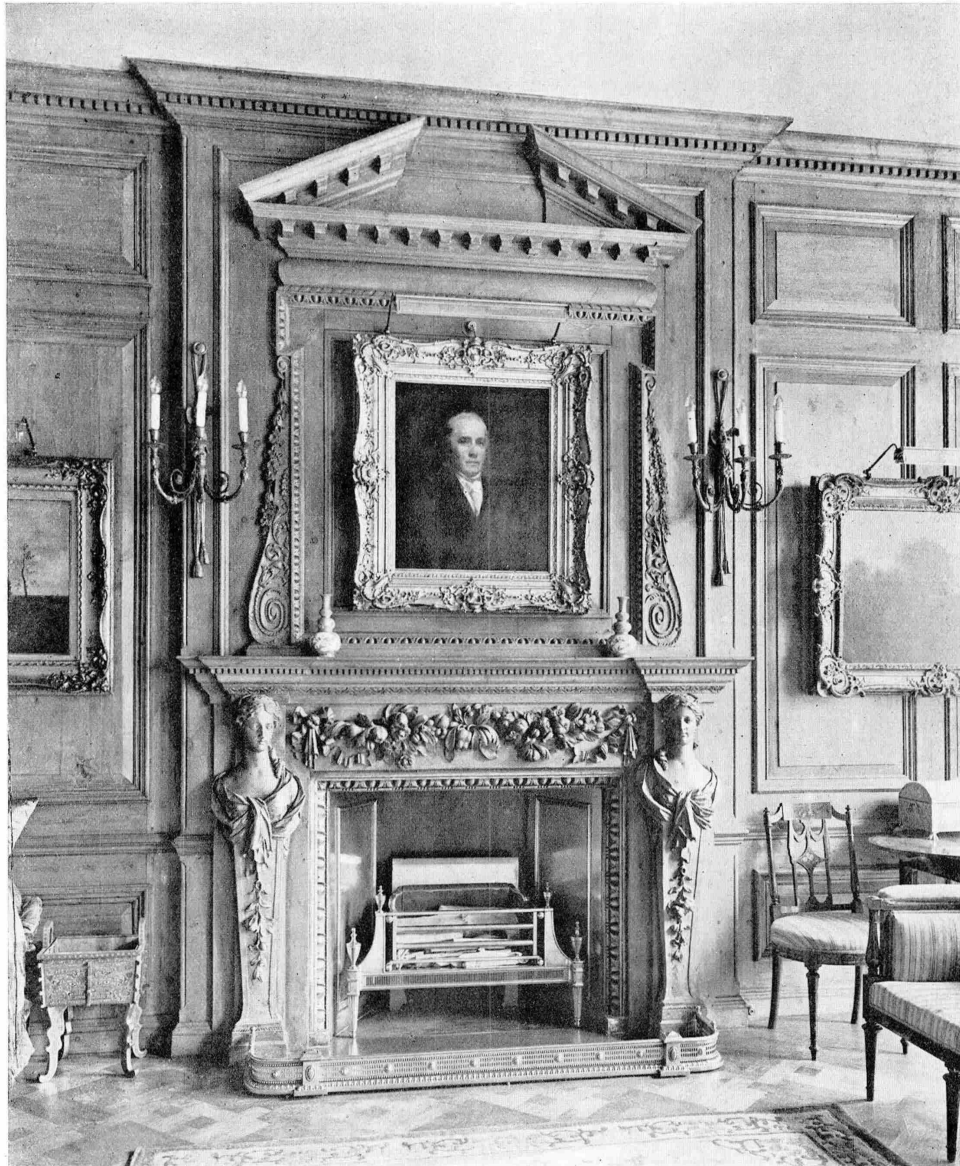
"COUNTRY LIFE."

conditions they had to be done; otherwise, in looking at the finished work, one may come to quite a wrong conclusion about some feature of planning, reconstruction or embellishment. Thus, in looking at the plan of Townhill Park, it is necessary to bear in mind that this was not one single thought-out scheme, but three—the original house and Mr. Guthrie's two enlargements of it. Yet, all has been done so that the plan becomes integral, with the principal rooms on the ground floor conveniently placed in regard to one another and to the service, and with a commodious arrangement of bedrooms on the first floor.

The approach to the house is by a private road which leads up from South Stoneham, where the first Lord Swaythling had his house. After traversing an avenue and some pasture we come to the forecourt. The house on this side is seen to

shallow projecting dormers. No doubt, if Mr. Guthrie had been designing a new house having the present accommodation, he would have been able to contrive matters so that the whole of the entrance front would have presented a symmetrical face, with one wing exactly balancing the other—and considered in conformity with the principles of Palladianism this would have given a completely satisfying result; but, as has been explained, the conditions which the architect had to face were entirely different: he was not making a new house; he was making the best of an old one, and experiencing the added difficulties of changes in the requirements when the work was actually in process of being carried out. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, his work is notably successful.

The forecourt is enclosed in front by a low stone balustrade, sweeping up to a pair of urn-crowned piers, whose structure



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4.—BOUDOIR CHIMNEYPIECE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

comprise a central pedimented block with a wing extending to right and left. It will be noted that the façades of the two wings are not alike, the fenestration being entirely different, though the same ridge-line is maintained across the whole front. The older wing, to the right of the central block, has two rows of shuttered windows, spaced equally apart and symmetrically set above one another, with wide projecting eaves and low-pitched roof. But the necessity of providing a large music room in the wing to the left of the centre block made a repetition of this façade impossible, for the music room occupies more than half the total height of the house, and demanded windows of a size proportionate to this height; and, as reasonable economy demanded that the remaining space above should not be wasted, it was arranged that servants' bedrooms should occupy the space, the roof on this side being treated as a mansard, with

is carried across to enclose an arched opening, filled by an iron gate. The balustrade continues on either side, framing in the ends of the forecourt, the house being backed on the left by some fine old trees, and having on the right an opening to the gardens and lawns.

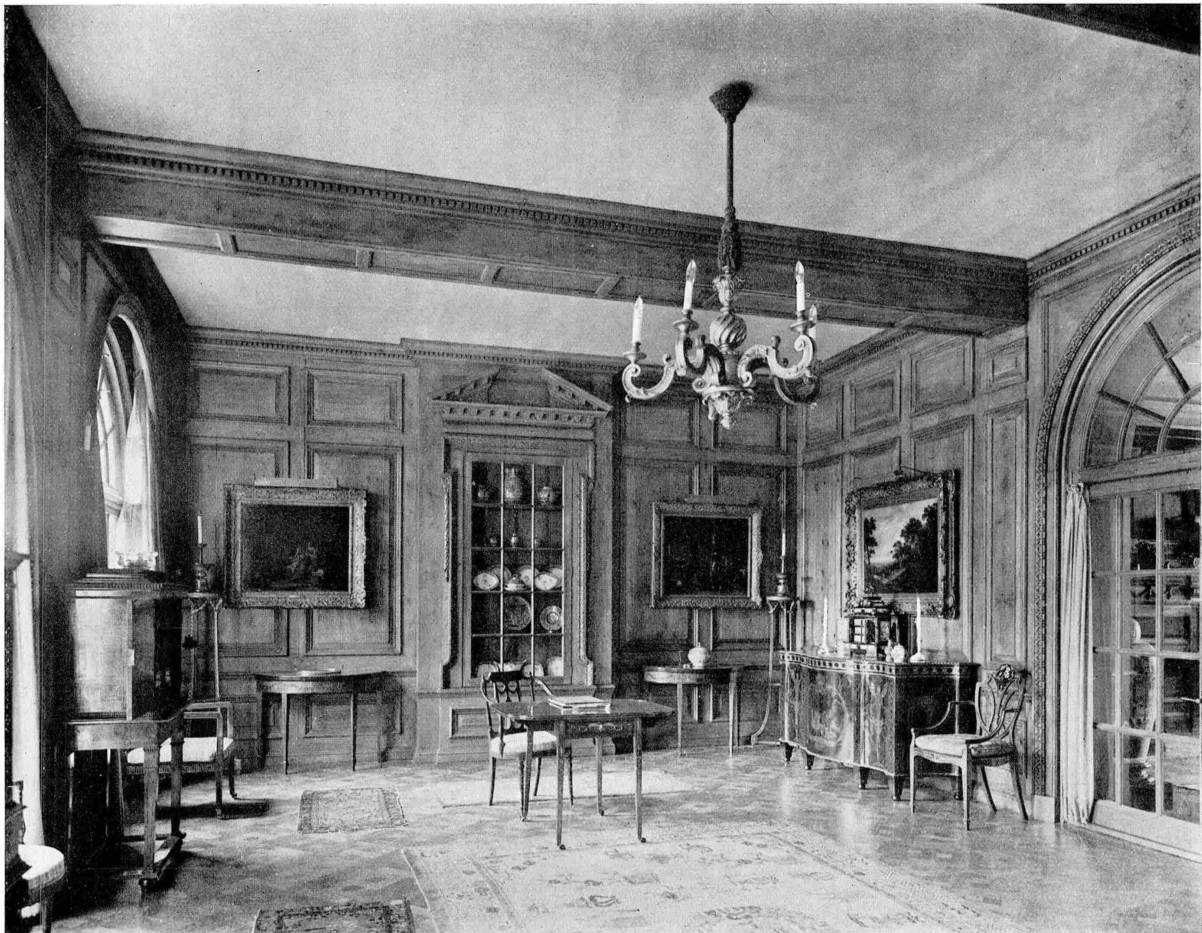
The central block is pierced at ground-floor level by the three arched openings of an entrance loggia, which is here contrived. This feature is not only interesting in itself, but is admirable both from the point of view of host and guest. There are three pairs of swing doors in the loggia opening into the hall, on the further side of which, and in line with the central opening to the loggia, is Lady Swaythling's boudoir. To the left of the hall a lobby, with cloak room on one side of it and gun room on the other, leads through to the music room, while to the right, axially in line with the lobby, a wide



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5.—GENERAL VIEW OF BOUDOIR.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



6.—END WALL OF BOUDOIR, SHOWING ORIGINAL DOORCASE ADAPTED TO CHINA CABINET.



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7.—ENTRANCE HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

The mantelpiece is an old one, painted a soft green tone, and the same tone is continued on the panelling.



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8.—MANTELPIECE IN SMOKING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

French workmanship, apparently of early nineteenth-century date.

corridor gives access to an inner hall, from which one reaches the smoking-room, the garden room and the dining-room.

The entrance hall has an old wood mantel of the kind which Chambers loved to design, refined in its lines, with delicate swags and floral ornament on the frieze. The mantel is painted a soft green colour, with its mouldings of a broken cream tone, and this colour scheme is continued in the panelling on the hall walls and in the corridor beyond. The floor is laid with parquet in herringbone pattern and is overspread with a blue Chinese rug having an Elizabethan table in the centre, while on either side of the doorway to the boudoir are a pair of Nankin Mandarin jars with covers, 38ins. high, painted with figures, landscapes and buildings in medallions on a trellis ground. They are Kang-He, formerly in the Alton Towers collection.

The boudoir is a particularly charming room, and therefore appropriate to its use as Lady Swaythling's own reception room. The walls are covered for their whole height with old panelling, which came from Chantry House in Nottinghamshire. Three views of it are given as Figs. 4, 5 and 6. It will be seen that there are series of long central panels with shallow panels above and below, the cornice being delicately dentilled. At one side is a chimneypiece having carved termes on either side of the opening (reminiscent of those on the Carrington House mantelpiece, now at South Kensington), with a floral frieze in high relief across. Above the shelf is a square panel, its surrounding egg-and-tongue moulding being taken out beyond the panel line at the top corners, in customary eighteenth century style, and having a slender oval scroll on either side at the bottom, the whole being crowned by a broken pediment. This panelling, apparently of pine, was, no doubt, originally painted. As now seen at Townhill Park, after having been pickled and slightly wax polished, it exhibits the mellow colour of old wood and makes a fitting background for the many fine paintings which are hung upon it. These paintings include several Dutch pictures. There is one by Pieter de Hooghe, of an interior with a woman nursing a child. Another is by N. Maes, of a Dutch interior with a pump in a kitchen. Another is by J. Van Ruysdael, of a watermill with two men opening the sluice. In the centre panel over the fireplace is a Raeburn, a portrait of the artist himself in brown coat and white stock; and to the right is a landscape by Hobbema. The furniture in the room includes a pair of rare cabinets on stands, set against the piers between the windows; and there are some fine specimens of English satinwood furniture, with a large divan overspread with multitudinous cushions in one corner. The floor is of parquet with Chinese rugs upon it, and from the centre of the ceiling hangs a wood chandelier. It should be noted that the arched doorways of this room were in existence before the panelling was acquired; and since it was impossible to put the original doorway in position as a doorway, an ingenious use of it, as a framing to a china cupboard on the wall opposite the fireplace, was devised. Reference to Fig. 6 will show how successful is the result.

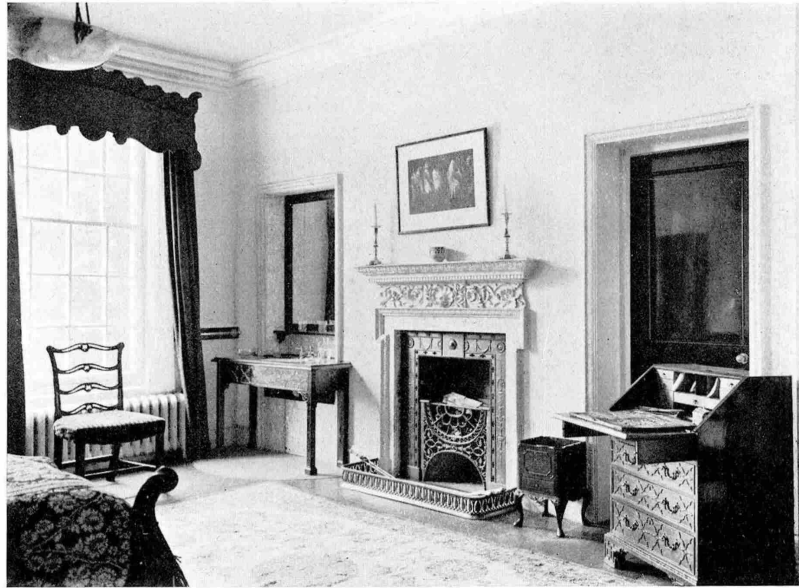
The general tone of this room is brown, very soft and restful.

The music room, as will be seen from Figs. 2 and 3, is a very fine room admirably proportioned—50ft. long, 30ft. wide and about 20ft. high. Its acoustics, too, are excellent, though precisely why it would be difficult to say, for acoustics belong to the vagaries of architecture, so that one room constructed according to rule makes an admirable room for sound, while another, seemingly very much the same, is bad for sound. The music room at Townhill Park is entirely panelled with English walnut, and as an example of modern joinery and craftsmanship does great credit to those who fashioned it. There are long figured panels extending from dado to frieze, with fluted Corinthian columns carrying a complete entablature.

The whole of the woodwork is wax polished, with the exception of the capitals to the columns, which are left untouched. A noble room in itself, it is made more so by the magnificent pictures and rare furniture which are to be seen in it; and, with regard to the pictures, it is noteworthy how these have affected the wall treatment. In this room, again, the main structural work had been completed when new requirements came into being and demanded adjustment. On reference to Fig. 1 it will be seen that there are five long windows on the front, but, actually, only three appear inside the room, the two end ones having been changed into lummies. This was done to provide more wall space on which to hang certain pictures which had not originally been contemplated in the scheme. They are the pictures on the flanking walls at the ends of the room. Another alteration of the original scheme is to be noted at the entrance end of the room. Originally the pair of doors to the left were in exact alignment with the centre of the corridor, but at this end of the room Turner's "Mercury and Herse" had to be set, and the width of this picture necessitated the doorway being moved to the left, so that sufficient wall space could be provided. The corresponding pair of doors to the right of the picture, seen in Fig. 3, are not quite what they seem, as they open only to a music cupboard, but this treatment of them as a balancing feature was wholly justifiable, since in a symmetrical design of this kind balanced repetition is in the essence of the design.

The chimneypiece in the music room is of verde antique marble, with rich green panels, and over it is set Reynolds' portrait of Captain Winter standing by his horse, painted in 1759. Flanking it to the right is a portrait of a man in armour by Van Dyck, and to the left a portrait of a lady in a dark gown dress with a ruff, by P. de Moya. The other pictures in this room are Constable's "Stratford Mill on the tour near Bergholt," painted in 1820; two by Gainsborough—"The Harvest Wagon" and a pastoral scene with cattle; and "The Hillside Farm," by John Linnell, senior.

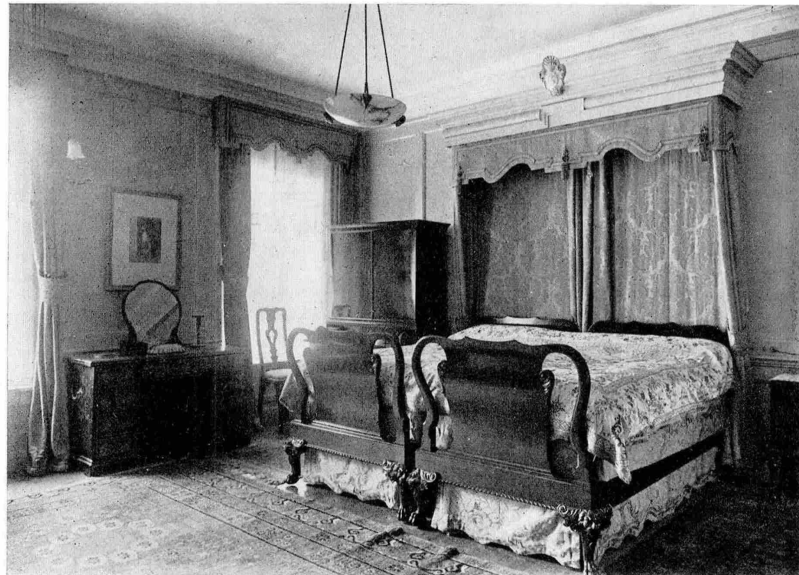
Of the furniture it is not possible now to speak in any detail, and it must suffice to say that the pieces include some fine specimens of English chairs of the Chippendale period, a splendid coromandel screen,



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9.—CHIPPENDALE BEDROOM.

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10.—QUEEN ANNE BEDROOM.

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11.—LADY SWAYTHLING'S BEDROOM.

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12.—TWO ARMCHAIRS OF CHIPPENDALE PERIOD IN THE MUSIC-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and a side-table of the George II period which is regarded as one of the finest specimens of its kind. There is also in the music room a grille or screen of painted and gilt iron, composed of six upright openwork panels with shields and plaques along the top having paintings in red, representing The Circumcision, The Flight into Egypt, The Nativity, The Road to Calvary, The Crucifixion, The Pieta and The Entombment, with receptacles for candles behind. It is French workmanship of the Louis XIV period.

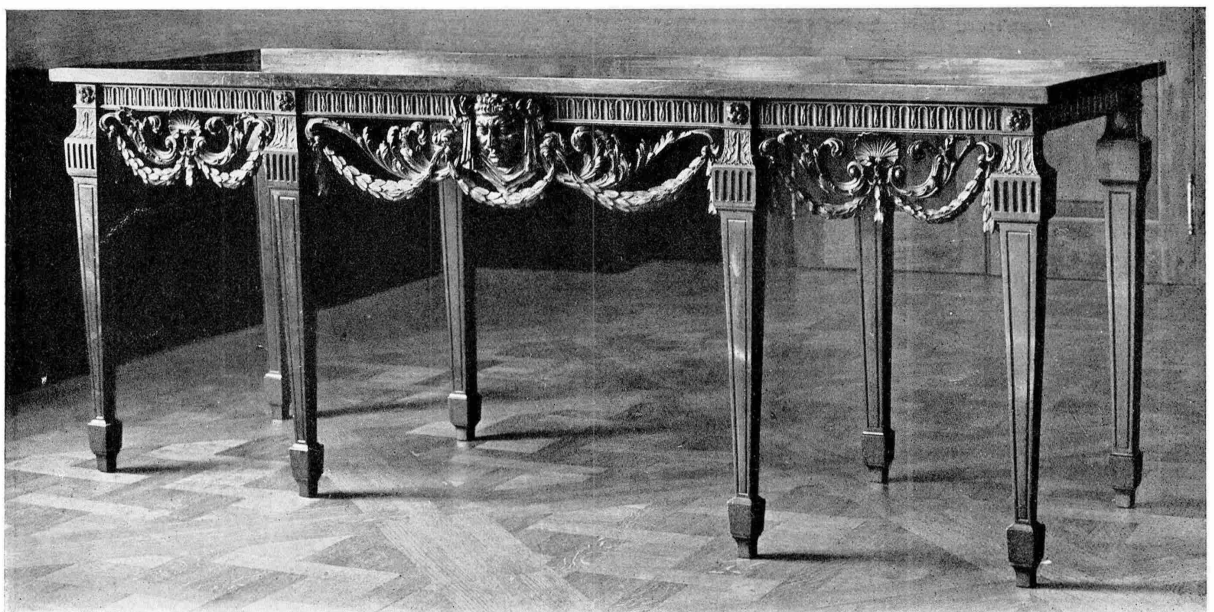
The floor (admirable for dancing, when the room is used as a ballroom) is laid with parquet in Versailles pattern, and from the centre of the ceiling hangs a lustre chandelier. About the whole room there is an air of elegance which the photographs faithfully record, but which only a personal sight can fully appreciate.

Of the other rooms on the ground floor, the three on the garden front call for a brief note, though there is no occasion

to write at length about them. The chief feature in the smoking-room is the mantelpiece, shown by Fig. 8. It is of French workmanship, apparently of early nineteenth century date, the interior, with its hob grate, embellished with anthemion ornament and claw feet of Empire character. In this room hangs George Morland's "The Post-Boy's Return."

The garden room, adjoining, is a very pleasant room, having white walls with window hangings of a claret rose tone; and white, too, are the walls in the third room on this front, the dining-room. Its furniture includes a pair of Georgian urn-crowned pedestals on either side of a side-table, and in one corner there is a wonderful old long-case clock.

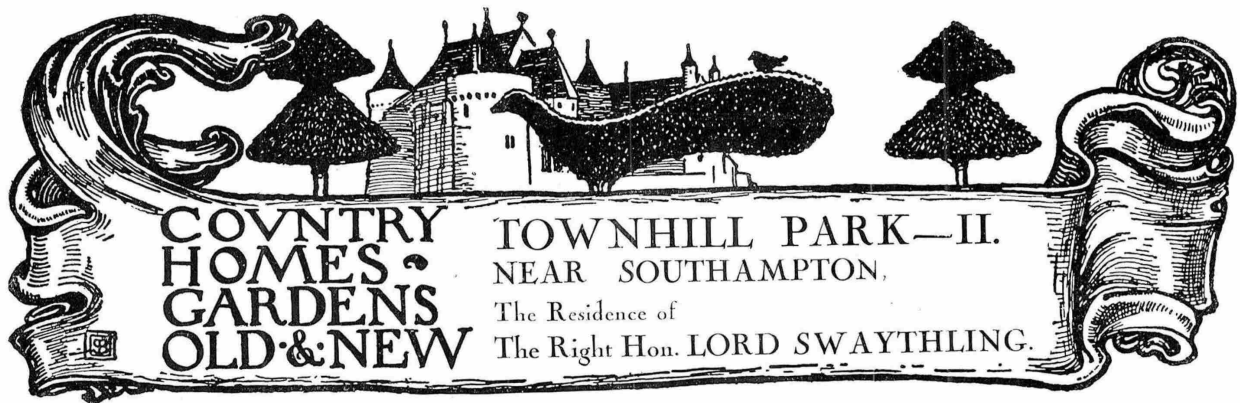
The staircase at Townhill Park is not an outstanding feature. It is just a pleasant oak staircase designed on familiar lines, its wall hung with a piece of seventeenth-century Brussels tapestry, showing Solomon building the Temple.



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13.—GEORGE II SIDE-TABLE IN MUSIC-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



**COUNTRY HOMES & GARDENS OLD & NEW**

**TOWNHILL PARK—II.**  
NEAR SOUTHAMPTON.  
The Residence of  
The Right Hon. LORD SWAYTHLING.

IN last week's issue of COUNTRY LIFE it was explained how Townhill Park, as we see it to-day, had grown by successive extensions from a house of the 'forties; and some account was given of its exterior and interior features. There now remain the gardens to be dealt with, and it is necessary to explain how these in turn have been evolved.

When, in 1910, Lord Swaythling first added to the house, there were no gardens worth mentioning, with the exception of a medium-sized kitchen garden boasting a wall of mellowed brick. On the west side of the house, where now we see such an attractive lay-out, were a winding path or two, some disconsolate shrubs of common sorts, a splendid mulberry, a cork tree, and a number of elms of good age. On the north side was pastureland and on the south and south-west was a thick

clump of old chestnuts and other trees, which screened the old barn and stables.

The aspect of the house as it then existed was somewhat peculiar, the main front, a little north of west, having been set to face the most open view. A new forecourt just large enough for a car to turn in took up the north front. The drive approached awkwardly from the south.

A study of this disposition at once made it evident where the new gardens should be. The initial requirements were simple—a terrace, a rose garden, some good herbaceous borders, two tennis lawns and a croquet lawn. These were arranged in a fairly symmetrical scheme on the west side of the house, difficulties of varying levels and existing trees having been overcome by introducing a slightly undulating second terrace at

natural levels somewhat as was done on a much larger scale at Drummond Castle. A reference to Mr. Guthrie's plan (page 539) will make this clear. The old mulberry tree came into its own in a fine position on the first terrace, and the cork tree was so carefully preserved that one of its branches pokes through a hole provided in the open-air dining-room.

Two or three years later Mr. Guthrie designed a further extension of the scheme to the west, comprising a sunk garden surrounded by a pergola and approached across a bowling alley, with some little formal gardens and a herb garden beyond, this portion of the scheme being flanked by trees symmetrically planted, but leaving the view open to the west across the Hampshire countryside.

The old drive from the south soon proved inadequate and inconvenient. A new road, about a mile long, was therefore laid out, not without difficulties as to gradients; and an even more serious problem as to foundations had to be faced where the road passes over ground little, if anything, above the Itchen, and just—and only just—above high-water level at spring tides. These various difficulties, however, were satisfactorily overcome. In designing the planting scheme for the road Mr. Guthrie combined with it a successful scheme for the extension of the Swan Copse, adjacent to the grounds, a woodland walk being formed through it. The road roller needed for the making of the new drive came in handily to improve the field on the north side of the sunk garden, this being intended for use as a



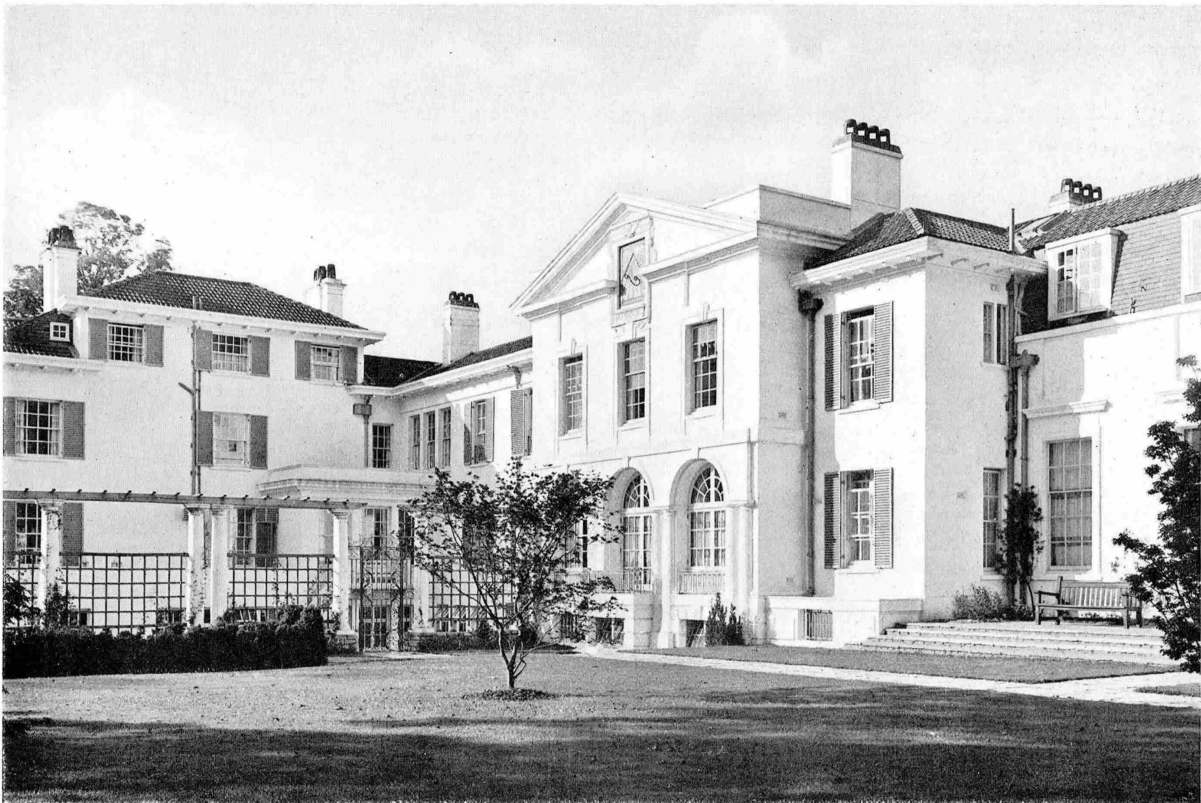




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2.—ENTRANCE FRONT.

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3.—SOUTH FRONT.

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4.—BETWEEN THE SUNK GARDEN AND THE HERB GARDEN.

“COUNTRY LIFE.”



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5.—THE HERB GARDEN.

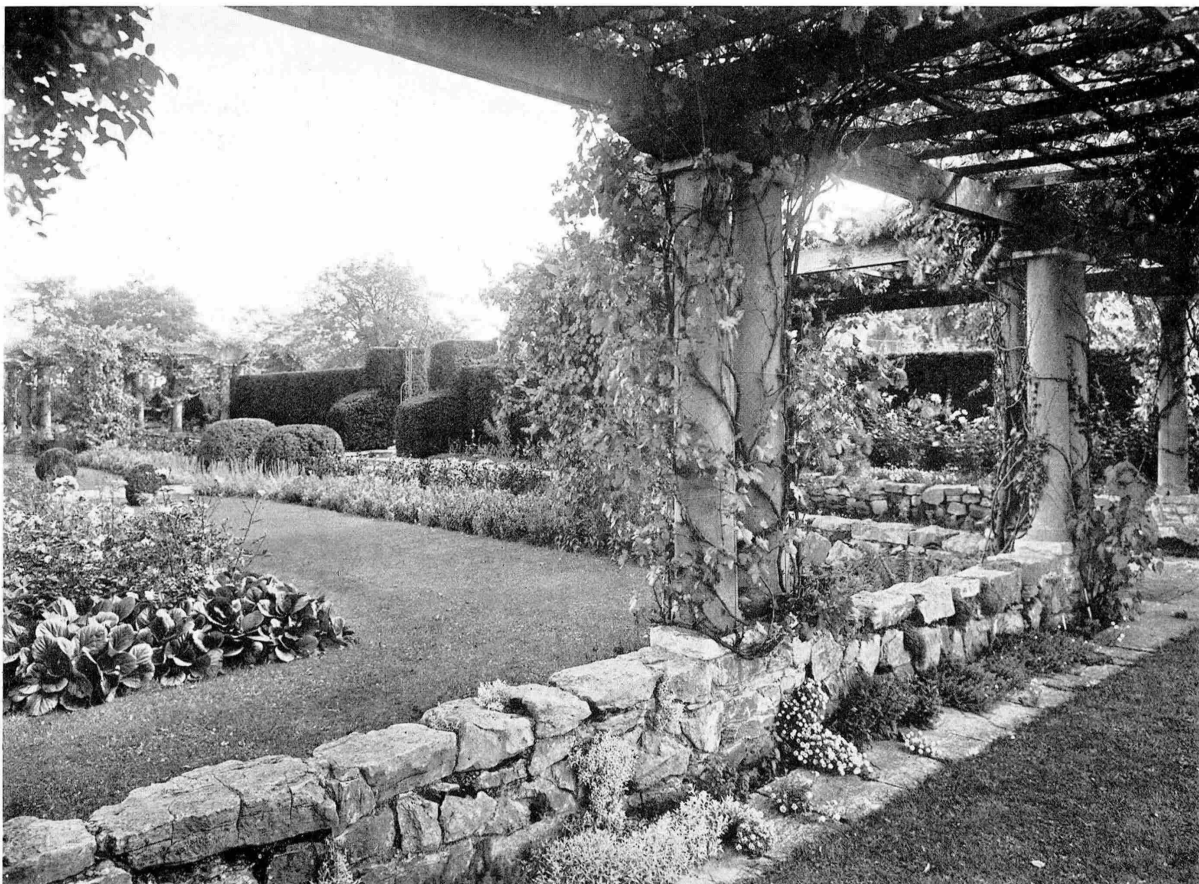
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6.—PERGOLA AROUND SUNK GARDEN.

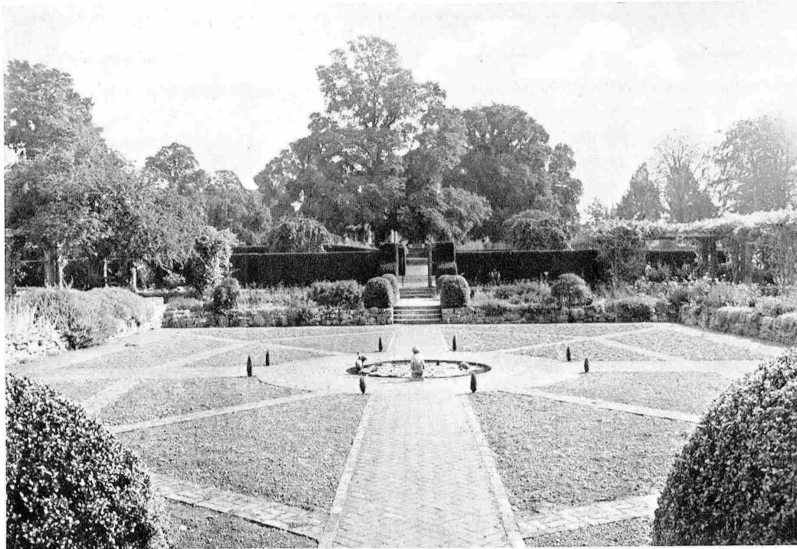
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7.—VIEW LOOKING ACROSS THE SUNK GARDEN.

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8.—GENERAL VIEW OF THE SUNK GARDEN.

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9.—DETAIL OF PERGOLA AND WALL AROUND SUNK GARDEN.



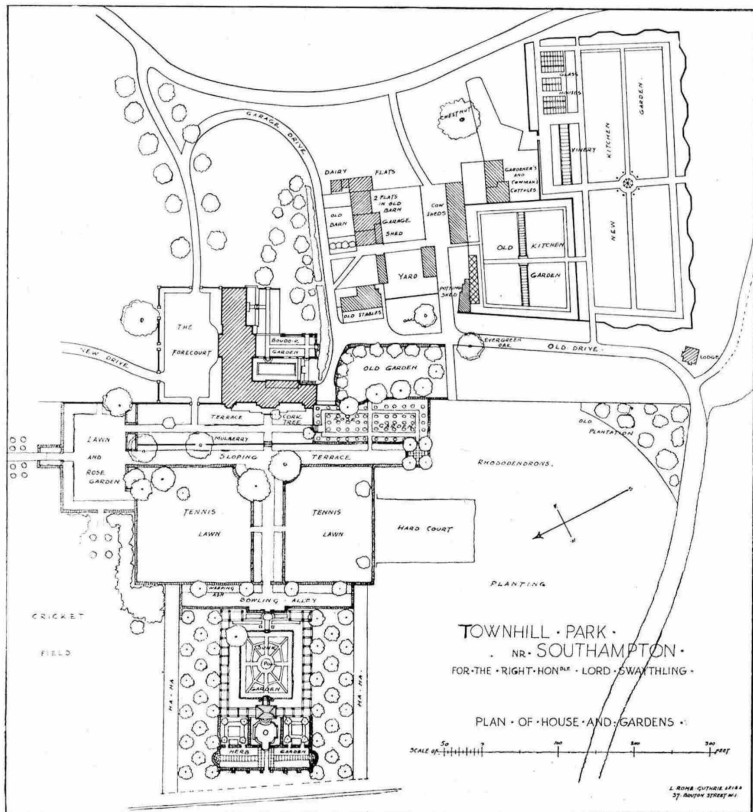
10.—LOOKING OUT FROM PERGOLA TOWARDS HERB GARDEN.

cricket ground—a place, indeed, where many a tough match has been played; and apart from the interest of the spot as a setting for the game, it is inviting to anyone who has a mind for sauntering and the quiet appreciation of landscape and cloud.

Further opportunity for exercise and pleasure was given by the making of a hard tennis court to the south of one of the grass lawns; and round and about this side of the grounds Lord Swathling is now engaged in laying out a fine plantation of rhododendrons—those great bushes which have such an absorbing attraction for many garden lovers. One does not plant rhododendrons casually. They exercise a positive fascination, with their wondrous colourings and varieties. So it is not surprising that, once their beauties become fully appreciated, there should be so many people who think them the finest things of all to grow.

What has been said above about the lay-out includes the major portion of the gardens at Townhill Park, but there is a very large area to the east and south taken up for the most part by kitchen gardens. Before, however, going on to speak of these, it is necessary to say something about the garden immediately adjacent to the south side of the house. This is called the boudoir garden, inasmuch as the boudoir looks out on to it. The development of the house in two stages set certain problems here. The old basement kitchen, facing east, had been incorporated in the wing which was first added on the south, a wide court, slightly below basement level giving light to this and to the new additional kitchen offices. When the boudoir and music-room wing was planned, necessities of aspect thrust it out at right angles to the line of the kitchen wing, and the garden was formed in the space enclosed between the house and the old stables and barn. The trees screening the latter were thinned out, and a scheme was worked out which involved the pulling down of the old stables, with the idea of forming a large simple garden at two levels, extending from the boudoir windows down to the north wall of the old kitchen garden. There were many difficulties in the way, but, undoubtedly, the aspect of such a garden would have been pleasant, the gable ends of the old outhouses providing a boundary to the east, and introducing that touch of homeliness which only old buildings of pleasant quality can bring. A considerable objection to the proposal, however, was the cross-traffic towards the kitchen entrance; and in the end it was found desirable to retain the old stables—a pleasing little brick building dating probably from the end of the eighteenth century—and to limit the size of the new garden to its present dimensions. The screen of columns seen in the view from the south-east divides this garden from the paved court which extends outside the kitchen offices, and incidentally adds interest to the scheme.

The building work involved going down so deep with the foundations under the boudoir that provision was made for a future billiard-room in the space. The ground level in the adjacent garden was lowered 2ft., and a range of three windows formed under



as the work proceeded. The recesses provide alike shelter and a variety of aspects for different fruits. The whole effect is businesslike and satisfactory, and the method adopted is interesting as an example of economical building.

Of the outbuildings that come between the kitchen gardens and the house, a word or two of explanation is needed. The old stables, which, as has been said, form a dignified little building, remain, though somewhat too near the house. The loft was converted into a useful set of rooms for manservants. Near by stands the old barn, with its thatched roof, a pleasant glimpse of which is gained through the trees of the boudoir garden. There is no longer any need to use it for its original purpose, so the centre part has been transformed into a garage, and the east end of the structure has been floored and divided into two small flats, the upper of which is reached by an outside stair.

Adjoining the barn is a new block of two cottages and dairy, over which it was intended to carry the line of thatching of the old barn, but the tyranny of local by-laws prevented this. Parallel with the barn is the old cowhouse, linked to the north wall of the old kitchen garden, and near it, again, the head gardener's and cowman's cottages have been rebuilt on their old site—very simple in design, but showing a quiet quality of walling gained by the use of old narrow bricks found in the inner walls of the old cottages.

R. RANDAL PHILLIPS.

the arched boudoir windows. This variation during the progress of the work cannot have been an easy matter to tackle, and it greatly affected the design of the garden; but it was successfully worked out, and the result is good and interesting. On this side of the house, set within a pediment, a large wall sundial has been placed. It is of painted and gilt copper, with delicate arabesques, and there is a winged cherub above to crown it. This sundial is a feature of special interest as seen from the boudoir garden.

Turning to the kitchen gardens, it will be seen from the plan that there are two, adjoining one another—the old kitchen garden, of comparatively small size, and the large new kitchen garden, opening out of it. The additional area was necessitated in conformity with the large extensions to the house which were carried out in 1920. This was a time when the prices of materials were near their peak, and a brick wall 10ft. high out of the ground and 900ft. long was a formidable item. Mr. Guthrie thereupon set out to consider various other ways of forming a wall, and ultimately he decided on the use of 4in. hollow bricks. But, obviously, a 4in. wall, if built on a straight line, would not withstand a gale of wind. Mr. Guthrie therefore designed an irregular wall in bays 15ft. long by 10 ft. high, forming on plan a succession of recesses about 5ft. deep and about 44ft. across, a 13 1/2 in. pier being built at each angle to give stiffness. Glass anti-frost coping was fixed to both sides of the walls running north and south, and on the sunny side of the walls that run east and west; a stout wooden coping giving some additional stiffness to the structure.

The long light walls thus constructed stood up nobly against some really severe gales immediately after the work had been completed, when the cement mortar was still green, and there has never been from the commencement any sign of settlement or collapse. Both faces of the wall are wired for fruit, staples having been built in



Copyright. 11.—VIEW IN KITCHEN GARDEN. "COUNTRY LIFE." Showing a new use of hollow bricks for the enclosing walls.



Copyright 12.—DAIRY, FLATS AND BARN. "COUNTRY LIFE."