

chamber at Windsor, and the death of him who had wished to compass my death. Then I must have cried out aloud, for one answered me immediately; and presently a man bent over my saddle and looked at me, and I saw the veiled face of him that had struck down the cavalier.

He was still wrapped all about in his great black coat, but his eyes shone bright between the folds of it, and his voice, while harsh as the croak of a marsh bird, was not lacking kindness.

"Hush, Master Peters," he said in some kindness, "bear with it a little while, and then I will ease thee. 'Tis better to laugh at thy cuts than to dance with the hangman. Another hour and we will do better for thee."

"Who are you?" cried I, groaning again, for he was whipping my horse now. "Who are you, and whither do you carry me?"

"Canst ask that," he exclaimed angrily, "after what I did in thy chamber? Nay, hold thy tongue, man. We ride in the forest of Windsor, and the Constable and twenty of his men are at our heels. God send the dawn soon, or we shall never see another."

With this he fell to lashing his own horse; and he called to another in his company not to spare whip nor spur.

"Dost hear them, Tom Robinson?" he bawled, "dost hear them? A plague upon this swinish thicket! Lord, that I should lose my way—I, that know the forest like my own devil's face."

There was a moment of silence after this; but presently the man, whoever he was, answered, as it seemed to me, from some distant place of the copse through which we rode.

"Ay, Master Israel, I hear them, and, by —, they have loosed the hounds."

My guide swore a great oath when the words were uttered, and pushed on still deeper into the brake. I could hear already the deep baying of the hounds in the forest behind us; and so great was my fear that I raised myself a little from my horse, and looked round at him who rode with me. His cloak had fallen back from his face now, but when he turned to speak, remembrance both of my situation and of the hounds passed away, and I called out again for very terror. He had the face not of a man, but of a devil, as he said; and no vulture was ever such an ill thing to look upon as this guide in whose keeping my life lay.

(To be continued.)

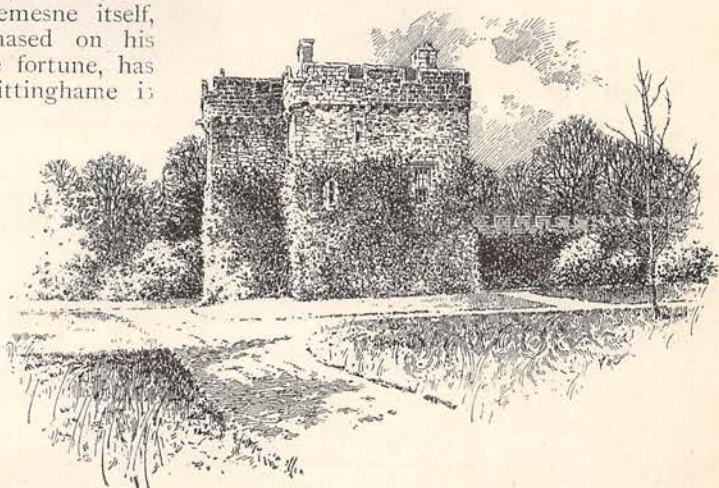


## THE HOMES OF THE TWO COMMONS LEADERS.

BY FREDERICK DOLMAN.

**W**HITTINGHAME HOUSE, which the Leader of the House of Commons inhabits during the Parliamentary vacation, was built by his grandfather, Mr. John Balfour, in 1817. But the demesne itself, which that gentleman purchased on his return from India with a large fortune, has a much longer history. Whittinghame is celebrated, indeed, in Scottish annals as having been at one time the home of the great Douglas family, whilst tradition has linked it with the tragic fortunes of Mary, Queen of Scots. Having been given Whittinghame Castle by the Queen, in 1564, it was there, we are told, that the Earl of Morton planned with Bothwell the murder of Darnley. A portion of the castle still existed in a habitable state early in the century, and in Stony-

path Tower, which is supposed to have been built about 1414, there is even yet a striking souvenir of the hoary past which Whittinghame can claim. Besides its



OLD TOWER, WHITTINGHAME.

historic interest, Mr. Balfour's home has the charm of some of the prettiest scenery of the South of Scotland—the wooded banks of the Firth of Forth on the one side, and the picturesque features of the Lammermoor country, as Scott describes them, on the other.

A drive of six miles from Dunbar brings you to the gates of Whittinghame—or rather to the fine stone pillars on which the gates should swing, for Mr. Balfour's park is now quite unenclosed. The park is divided into two parts by a ravine along which flows a stream known locally as Whittinghame water or burn. The old castle stood on the north side of this ravine, and here are still the gardens and glass-houses. But Whittinghame House was built on the other side, being reached from the gardens by stepping-stones and a light wooden bridge.

Viewed from this bridge, through great masses of foliage, the mansion makes quite a pleasing picture. In reality, it was built in the plain, simple style which prevailed in Scotland early in this century. But shortly after coming of age and succeeding to the property, Mr. Balfour made various changes in the building, and, with Grecian pillars at the entrances, broad bay windows and a terrace with ornamental balustrade, the house has lost all its original austerity.

Inside the house there is a complete absence of the splendour which Mr. John Balfour's fortune would doubtless have justified, and which the extent of the well-timbered grounds

around it is apt to suggest. But every room seems replete with ease and comfort—drawing-room equally with dining-room, the library as well as billiard saloon, Mr. Balfour's study no less than Miss Balfour's boudoir. In the entrance hall, in addition to a large collection of rural hats and coats, there are to be found several bicycles and a miscellaneous assort-

ment of golfing tools. Both the statesman and his sister have imbibed the cycling fashion, and when going to Dunbar or North Berwick for a game of golf the former often prefers the "wheel" to horse and trap.

Stepping from the hall into the corridor, you recognise at once the handiwork of the present proprietor of Whittinghame in the books which, having long since overflowed from his library and study, are piled along the walls. By far the greater number of the few thousand books now in the house give evidence of the literary taste of the author of "The Foundations of Belief."

In the library itself, a long, well-lighted apartment with a panelled ceiling of dark oak, nearly the whole of the substantial tomes, bound in calf and vellum, were probably placed there as part of the original furnishing of the house; a glance at the well-written catalogue (in which Mr. Balfour himself has made numerous marginal notes) suggests that most of them are works of unquestionable literary orthodoxy. But in his study, at the other side of the house, the shelves have evidently been filled just as the taste and fancy of the Leader of the House of Commons suggested, and a rather remarkable



THE RIGHT HON. A. J. BALFOUR, M.P.

(From a photograph by W. & D. Downey, Ebury Street, S.W.)

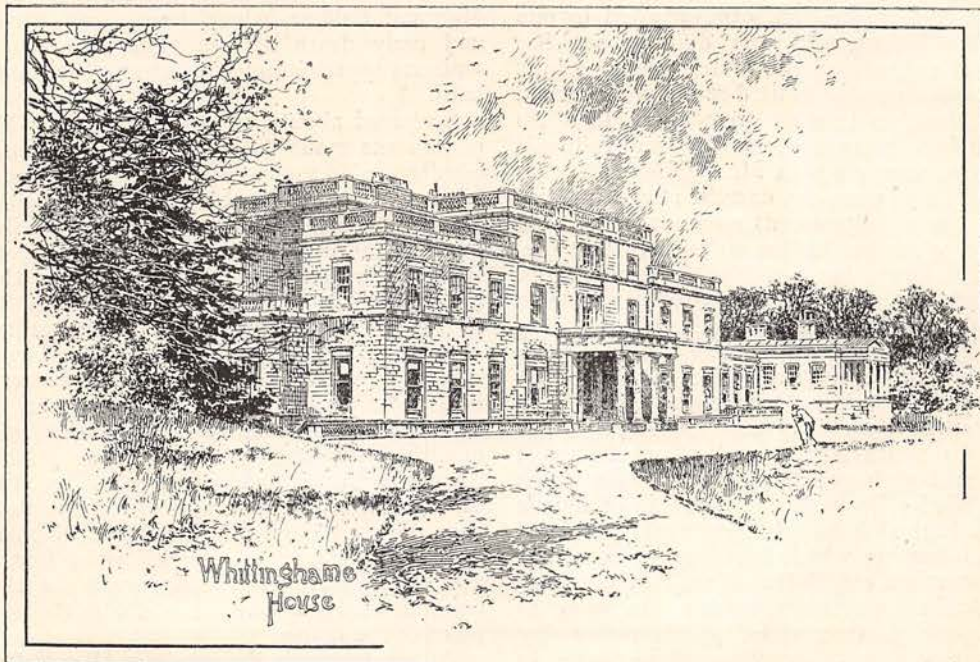
variety of books, both in subject-matter and in style of binding, is the result. Metaphysics make perhaps the most formidable show, but history—and especially modern history—is exceptionally well represented. Political works—pure and simple—are not so numerous as many would have supposed; there is a small cluster of volumes on the Irish question, however, evidently a survival of the time when Ireland was absorbing all Mr. Balfour's time and energy. Of fiction and poetry there is comparatively little. A glance along the shelves indiscriminately, if it does not suggest exceptional versatility, indicates that Mr. Balfour has studied both sides of most questions. The books of his opponents in politics and philosophy are probably even more numerous than those of his own way of thinking.

In this room Mr. Balfour spends most of his time when he is indoors at Whittinghame, probably finding in its smaller size greater comfort than would be possible in the library. In it was written the greater part of his book, "The Foundations of Belief;" a copy of this book, by the way, lying on a small table by the side of "A Defence of Philosophic Doubt," has its pages interleaved with blank sheets of white paper for the making, presumably, of such additions and emendations as criticism and reflection may suggest. The room is at a corner of the house, and having

two large windows there is no wall space available for pictures, whilst neither photographs nor sketches are to be found on mantelpiece or tables. But close to the large writing desk (which is of the American pattern and of mahogany wood) there is an iron grand pianoforte with a music stand by its side for performance on some other instrument, and the presence of these somewhat unusual articles in a study strikingly confirms the great love Mr. Balfour is supposed to have for music. From this room, I believe, the strains of piano and violin are often heard far into the night.

Mr. Balfour may often be tempted to defer sleep by the fact that his bedroom adjoins his study; he has but to take three or four steps to seek repose. This sleeping apartment on the ground floor is in its small size and great simplicity in striking contrast to some of the bed-chambers on the upper storey, and that Mr. Balfour should have chosen it in order that he might more conveniently burn "the midnight oil" when the desire for study or for music seized him, is a circumstance of some significance.

Apart from family portraits there are few pictures in the house, and what there are are not of Mr. Balfour's purchasing. The Burne-Joneses and other specimens of contemporary art are at present in the house which Mr. Balfour occupies for the season in Carlton





THE YEW TREE, WITH WHITTINGHAME HOUSE IN THE DISTANCE.

House Gardens; but some day they will probably find a resting-place at his East Lothian seat. In the drawing-room are three or four fine landscapes painted by one of his kinswomen; the dining-room has several examples of the Dutch school; whilst the walls of the billiard-room are adorned with sketches relating to country life. As an indoor recreation, by the way, billiards has the same place in Mr. Balfour's affection as golf for open-air exercise; and in this room he usually spends an hour or so after dinner whenever he has visitors in the house. It is so large that a full table occupies not a quarter of its space, and when Mr. Balfour has a family gathering at Whittinghame, it is usually used in the daytime as a school-room for his little nephews and nieces.

A peep into Miss Balfour's boudoir is very interesting because of the souvenirs of her visit to South Africa, and of specimens of her skill with pencil and brush with which it is filled. Probably her best bit of artistic work is the "head" of her brother, a small pencil drawing which has caught one of the characteristic expressions of the Parliamentary Leader in a wonderful fashion. It seems to give one a truer idea of his personality than the bust in marble, which stands in

one of the corridors of Whittinghame. Among other family portraits in this room is one of the statesman's father, Mr. James Maitland Balfour, whose fragile constitution and early death at one time gave rise to ominous apprehensions concerning the present laird.

Scattered about the house is a whole host of presents made to Mr. Balfour by political admirers. To some the donors had evidently tried to give political significance, such as a satin cushion by an Irish lady, who had embroidered upon it the rose, shamrock, and thistle. Among gifts dictated by other than political feeling is an inkstand from the Whittinghame Curling Club, in recognition of kindness shown to them by Mr. Balfour. Amongst innumerable illuminated addresses is to be noticed that of the tenantry on the Whittinghame estate, testifying to his good qualities as a landlord, and to their pride in his distinguished public career. The silver caskets containing Borough "freedoms," gold keys with which public buildings have been opened, and silver trowels with which foundation stones have been laid, require for their accommodation a large iron safe in the basement of the house.

As her brother's housekeeper Miss Balfour

undertakes the management of the gardens at Whittinghame, which are not now maintained, however, on the scale which formerly made them so well known in East Lothian. There are still eighteen glass-houses and extensive beds for flowers, fruit, and vegetables, but only ten gardeners are employed—about half the number whose services were at one time required. Mr. Balfour has no favourite flower, cares nothing for horticulture, and seldom crosses the “burn” to visit the gardens. Nor does Mr. Balfour ever trouble the extensive game preserves which usually afford admirable sport for such of his guests as enjoy a day’s shooting. When he comes into the grounds it is usually to play a game over the small links of nine “holes,” which, chiefly with a view to the enjoyment of the ladies of the house, were made in the park a year or so ago. To Mr. Balfour himself this is probably a poor alternative to a morning with the crack players of North Berwick.

The leafy beauty of Whittinghame Park was largely the work of Mr. Balfour’s grandfather, who designed most of its pleasant

specimen of the eucalyptus in Scotland; it was taken to Whittinghame from Australia by the late Lord Salisbury, father of the present Premier, sixty years ago, and, notwithstanding the rigours of the climate, has attained to a wonderful size. The other is a yew, near Stonypath Tower, one of the largest in the kingdom, under whose outspread branches the conspiracy which led to the assassination of Darnley is believed to have been concocted. The branches of the tree, which embrace the grounds at all points, with the exception of one tiny opening, have a circumference of one hundred and twenty feet, and, in the arched space thus formed, some three hundred school children have been seated at the same time. In forty years the circumference of the tree has grown by thirty feet. In Darnley’s time this tree was probably quite close to Lord Morton’s extensive castle, of which only the Tower or “Keep” remains. This is still in sufficiently good repair, however, to provide habitations for one or two of Mr. Balfour’s gardeners. A climb up its well-worn stone steps is well

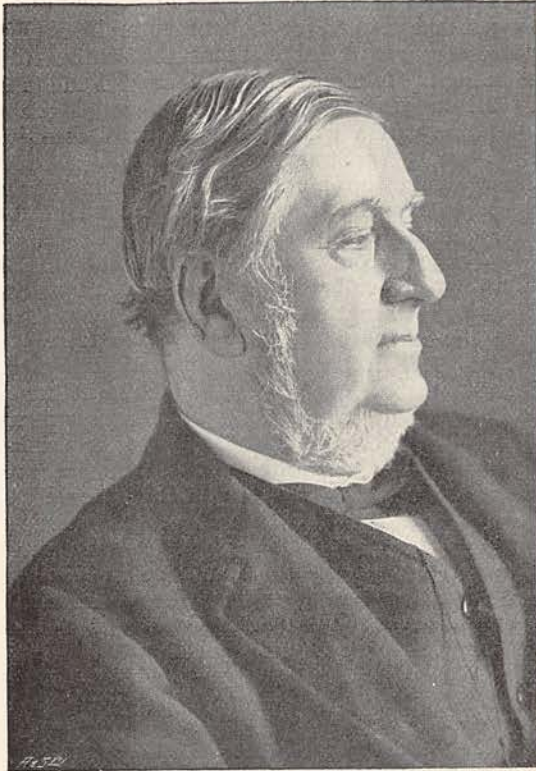


WHITTINGHAME HOUSE (BACK VIEW).

avenues. Oaks, firs, limes, beeches, etc., were planted by him in large numbers; and what were last century bare places are now rich with foliage. There are two remarkable trees which are shown to most visitors to Whittinghame. One is considered the finest

rewarded by a fine view of sea and country, revealing to the full on a clear day the picturesque surroundings amid which Mr. Balfour has his home.

The house in the New Forest where Sir William Harcourt is fond of cultivating his



THE RIGHT HON. SIR WM. G. G. VERNON HARCOURT,  
P.C., Q.C., M.P.

(From a photograph by Elliott & Fry, Baker Street, W.)

domestic fireside is, so to speak, but a thing of yesterday. It occupies the site, however, of a building so old, that tradition pointed it out as the place where William Rufus breakfasted on the day of his mysterious death. This building, of which only a ruinous relic remained, was long the official residence of one of the head-keepers of the Forest, to whom was allotted a small slice of land. About eight years ago Sir William Harcourt took a long lease of this land from the Crown, and built upon it a spacious villa of Queen Anne's style. The architect was Mr. Evan Christian, but the main features of the house were designed by Sir William and Lady Harcourt themselves, their son residing near the spot during the building in order to see that their wishes were faithfully carried out. It has a gabled roof, latticed balconies, and large square windows. The dark red walls still emphasise the newness of the house; but they are being rapidly covered by thriving creepers of various kinds, including clematis and the passion plant. Castle Malwood Lodge—which is the proper title of Sir

William Harcourt's home, although it is generally abbreviated to Malwood—is undoubtedly one of the prettiest of the numerous comparatively new residences in the New Forest.

It has great advantages in point of its situation—which is on an eminence four hundred feet above the sea level, about three miles from the little town of Lyndhurst. A glimpse of the house through the trees is to be obtained some distance away; while from its windows can be enjoyed some of the most delightful "peeps" of the Forest, extending across miles of richly-tinted timber to the vales of Dorsetshire on the one side, and the Isle of Wight, the Solent, and Southampton Water on the other. The enclosed ground around the house is only some four acres in extent, but with some of the best scenery and most secluded parts of the Forest at his door, Sir William Harcourt has no desire for a larger estate. Sir William has about twenty acres in addition, however, which are used for farming—for the production chiefly of the poultry, eggs, butter, milk, and vegetables consumed by his household. In this farm the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer takes an active interest, and, small as it is, it has enabled him to keep in close, practical touch with agricultural questions and their difficulties. The farm buildings, which, together with the stables and the coachman's cottage, are about four hundred yards from the

house, have quite a picturesque appearance given to them by the creeping plants placed against the red brick walls. The live stock include a herd of Jersey and Guernsey cows, and about four hundred chickens. In the stables are to be seen the pair of black Russian ponies presented to Sir William Harcourt by Mr. Armitstead, and the chaise in which the statesman is accustomed to be driven about the Forest by his son "Lulu."

The arched entrance-door of black oak, to which a short carriage-drive conducts you from the high road, opens into a small square hall, in which I noticed a number of old engravings of Stancy-Harcourt, the ancestral home of Sir William's family in Oxfordshire. From an inner hall of somewhat larger size you can walk into the principal rooms of the house—the drawing-room, the dining-room, and the library. In the decoration and furnishing of these rooms—as, indeed, of the whole house—lightness and brightness have been very skilfully reconciled with a large measure of the solid and substantial. Another feature of the whole house, which cannot fail

to impress Sir William Harcourt's visitors, is the almost entire absence of anything bearing upon his public career. The house proclaims its owner to be a man of culture, for there are shelves of books along one side of the broad corridors—the overflow of an extensive, if not very remarkable, library. Of Sir William's many years' service to the State, there is in any part of the house, however, scarcely a hint or suggestion. A stranger examining all its rooms, might well conclude that Castle Malwood Lodge was but the residence of a country gentleman with a love for books.

In Sir William Harcourt's own room, for instance—the apartment in which are written the trenchant letters on current politics that the newspapers occasionally receive from his pen—there are to be observed no souvenirs of political friendships or relics of public controversies such as I had seen at Highbury. There are a few portraits in oils and in black and white, principally of Sir William and Lady Harcourt's kinsmen, among them of Motley, the historian, and Sir George Cornwall Lewis. On one or two small tables are also a few photographs,

but the only one to attract attention is of Prince Bismarck on horseback. It must be left to conjecture whether the Liberal Leader thus honours the "man of iron" out of admiration for his career, or from sympathy with a figure of physical proportions even more splendid than his own. Blue books and Parliamentary papers cannot be discovered in this or in other rooms of Malwood, but on the tables there is a profusion of what must be described as miscellaneous volumes, with the current numbers of various magazines and reviews. A large oriel window in the corner of the room, which floods the room with light and sunshine, gives Sir William, when he lays down his book or his pen, several fine vistas of scenery. Southampton Water, glistening in the light of the morning sun, must be an inspiring sight when beginning the day's work.

With forethought equally admirable, the dining-room was placed on the western side of the house, and from its windows those partaking of the evening meal in summertime can enjoy the sunset view over the rich pasture land between the New Forest



THE LIBRARY, MALWOOD, SHOWING SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT'S CHAIR AND WRITING-TABLE.

(From a photograph by J. G. Short, Lyndhurst.)



MALWOOD

(From a photograph by J. G. Short, Lyndhurst.)

and Dorchester. By far the most conspicuous thing in this room is the full-length portrait of Sir William Harcourt's grandfather in his robes as Archbishop of York. The other portraits include one or two by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and have among their subjects Gray, the poet of the "Elegy," and Rousseau, in his Arminian dress. The most remarkable canvas at Malwood hangs by the side of the dining-room fireplace, which has for mantelpiece an Indian wood gate that was exhibited at South Kensington some years ago. This is the portrait of the Queen on a horse, which was undertaken by Landseer shortly after her Majesty's accession. The picture was never finished, there being little more than the pencilled outline of the horse. The Queen once told Sir William Harcourt that she well remembered even now how painfully fatiguing she found sitting in the saddle while the great artist painted her. Apart from its subject, the picture is extremely interesting in an artistic sense, because of the revelation that it makes of Landseer's method.

Occupying a place of honour in the drawing-room is the tea-service of Crown Derby presented to Sir William Harcourt by his late constituents at the Midland town.

The drawing-room is not large for the size of the house; but what it lacks in space, it probably gains in comfort. Its cushioned chairs of light tasteful colours look only less tempting than the "cosy corners" in Lady Harcourt's boudoir, which is on the upper floor. In Mr. L. V. Harcourt's room, adjoining, there is a very interesting collection of Etoniana. In the fulness of his love for the old school, Mr. Harcourt has for several years gathered together every book, magazine, and article concerning it, that he could lay his hands upon. Among other things there is a complete edition of the *Eton Miscellany*, in which Mr. Gladstone's first writings appeared, and specimens of nearly all the other more or less ephemeral magazines which have since issued from the school. The collection is prettily bound in Eton light blue, and some day will probably be presented to the school, whose library at present lacks anything of the kind. Sir William himself, by the way, has given an indication of similar affection for his college days by the retention, in his dressing-room, of the old "four-poster" bedstead in which he slept at Cambridge.

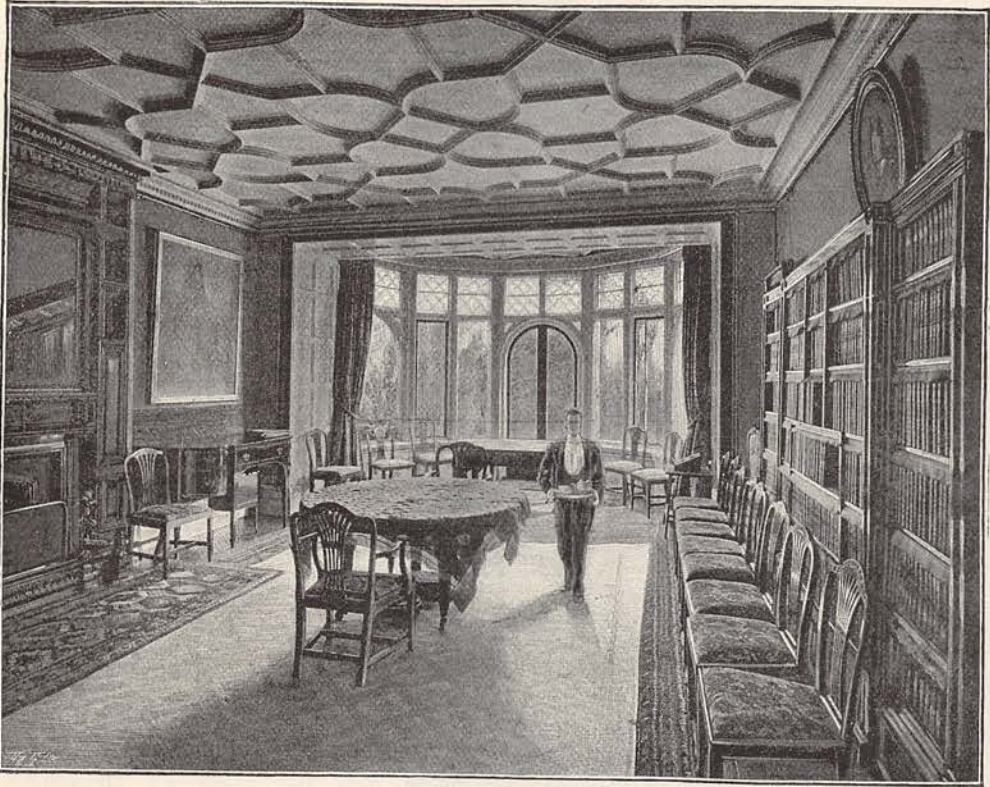
The most interesting feature of the grounds is the "Friendship Garden"—a little space



set apart for the planting of trees by Sir William Harcourt's best and oldest friends. It was begun by Mr. Gladstone, who planted an oak, and Mrs. Gladstone, who planted an elm, on the occasion of their tour of the West Country about six years ago. During this visit to Malwood, too, the ex-Premier signed an engraved portrait of himself which hangs in one of its rooms. Another corner of the grounds, close to the tennis court, is devoted to the cultivation of a number of fine Italian plants, which Sir William and Lady Harcourt collected on the occasion of a recent visit to

deceased, which were given to Mr. L. V. Harcourt by one of the Rothschilds.

Sir William Harcourt is often spoken of as "the squire of Malwood." In point of fact, this title belongs to another gentleman of the name of Compton; but in the New Forest, the squirearchy have comparatively little power. Minstead, the large scattered parish in which Sir William Harcourt's residence is situated, is mostly inhabited by farmers and cottagers who hold their land direct from the Crown, grow little or no corn, and chiefly concern themselves with the rearing of cattle,



DINING-ROOM, MALWOOD.

(From a photograph by J. G. Short, Lyndhurst.)

Italy. An Italian verandah, consisting of various climbing plants growing over a light wooden trellis, is reminiscent of "the great Budget" of 1894. Its making was the then Chancellor of the Exchequer's recreation in the midst of the heavy labour which the preparation of that measure entailed. Wandering about the grounds are a goodly number of tame birds, including peacocks—some of which were the gifts of friends. You may perchance come across an infant kangaroo, too, the child of a fine pair of animals, now

for which they have grazing rights on the common pasture of the Forest, the production of fruit, and various small industries belonging to a wooded district. Nevertheless, Sir William and Lady Harcourt take a kindly interest in the welfare of the village of Minstead, which is remarkable for the number of its apple orchards. At Christmas time, for example, it is their custom to entertain the school children, and present them with pretty things from one of the big Christmas trees which grow in large numbers hereabouts.