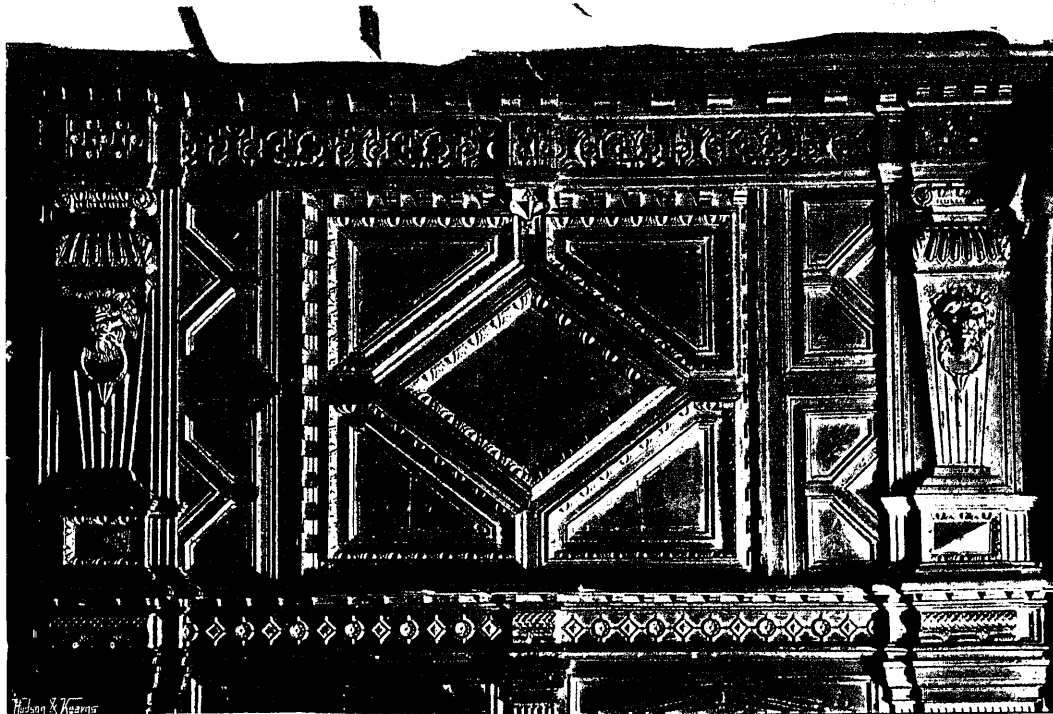


*THE DAIS IN THE HALL.*



end of the room is a solid piece of panelling with arms and supporters of the quaintest character, and the date 1610. A fine piece of tapestry of unusual size hangs over the entrance to the curious little chapel, and the large staircase of nearly a century later, which ascends from the east side of the hall to some rooms overhead, all of which are completely panelled in old oak or decorated with Spanish leather. One of these rooms is celebrated as having been occupied by Bishop Ken, a constant visitor in later times at Levens. Some of the Bellingham pistols and other arms with dates and initials, together with the breastplates of the armed retainers, who might be called for by the Warden of the Marches, hang round the walls.

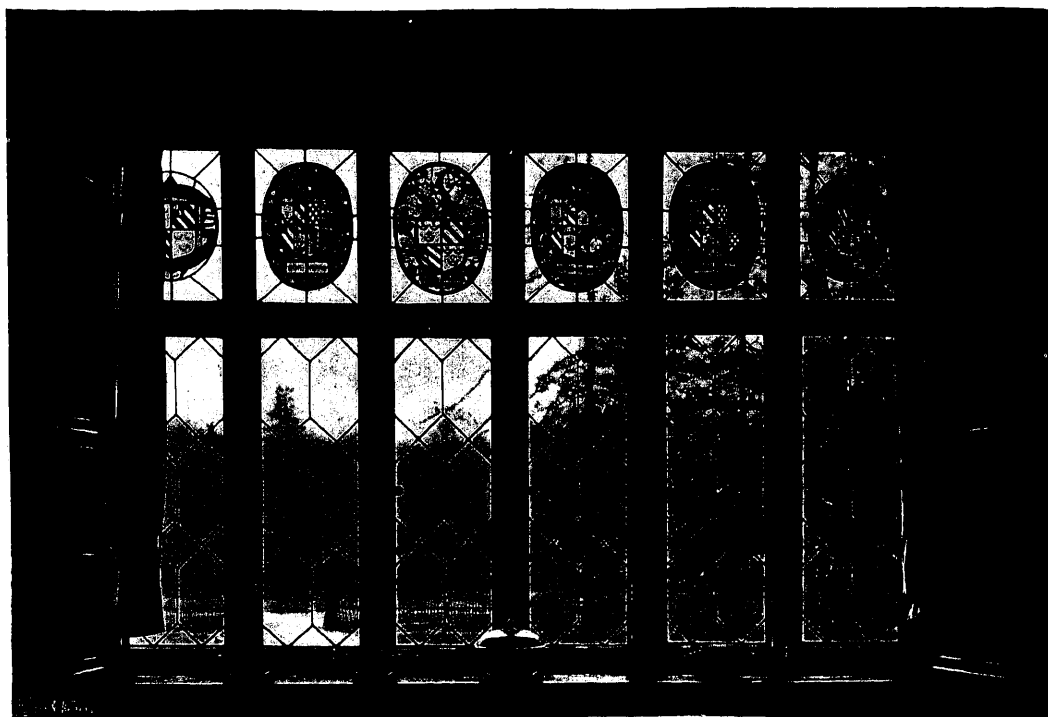
The north drawing-room, which, together with the smaller room adjoining it to the south, opens out from the east side of the hall, is built over the arched basement of the old pele tower of the thirteenth century. A magnificent carved oak chimney-piece, with Bellingham arms and the date 1690, is the principal feature of this room, which is entirely panelled with a large diamond pattern, while the inner drawing-room to the south has a much smaller pattern of the same sort, and another massive carved chimney-piece of the same date. In the latter room is a beautiful picture by Hoppner, of Lady Mary Bagot, while in the larger room there is, besides the valuable collection of miniatures shown in our illustration, an extremely pretty picture of the school of Holbein, said to be Queen Anne Boleyn.



THE DINING-ROOM CHIMNEY-PIECE.

The stained glass in the windows of both rooms consists of coats of the arms of the Bellingham family and their connections, in excellent preservation; and amongst the many curiosities and artistic treasures in these rooms may be noticed two charters connected with Levens of 1172 and 1190, which have been mentioned, the latter with the seal of Richard I. attached and re-indorsed after Richard's return from captivity, a letter of Mme. de Pompadour's, James II.'s private accounts, the clasp of Napoleon's cloak, taken at Waterloo, and some fine Sèvres china, with portraits of Napoleon and his generals hunting, which belonged to the Duke of Wellington. The furniture throughout these rooms is entirely in keeping with the surroundings, and much of the carved work is very fine.

Perhaps the most perfect in its Elizabethan style and the prettiest room in the house is the dining-room on the west side of the hall. This chamber is partly panelled and partly covered with a very richly-coloured Spanish leather; in the old inventories of the eighteenth century it is designated the "Gilt Parlour," no doubt from this gilded leather. The picture shown in our illustration of this room is one of Henry VII., by Mabuse, which was reproduced in the catalogue of the Tudor Exhibition a few years ago. The rich inlay and carving over the mantel-piece are of great interest, and have the appearance of the work of yesterday, though the centre panel tells

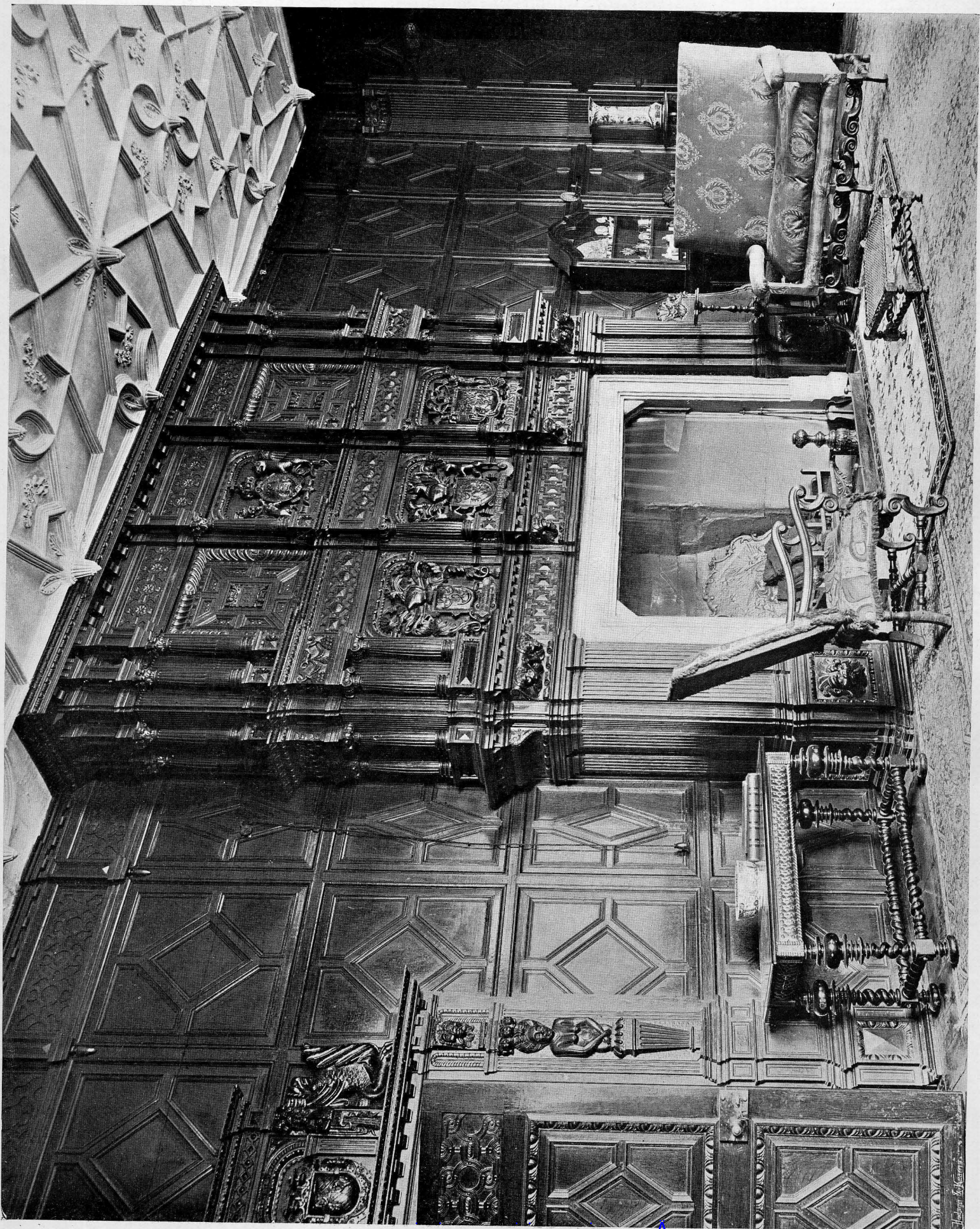


A WINDOW IN THE DRAWING-ROOM.



A WINDOW IN THE DRAWING ROOM.





THE DRAWING-ROOM FIREPLACE.



its own tale, and depicts the arms and initials of Sir James and Agnes Bellingham, with the date 1586. On the ceiling are the red rose of the Tudors, the fleur de lys, and the Bellingham crest, in plaster-work. This room remains in exactly the state in which Sir James Bellingham left it, with the exception of one window, which is a later insertion.

The last of the Bellinghams of Levens was Alan, who represented Westmorland from 1681 to 1685. He sold his whole estate to Colonel James Graham, or Grahme, as he spelt it, a younger brother of Sir Richard Graham of Netherby, who was created Viscount Preston, and was sentenced to death for high treason a few years later. This Alan is described by a contemporary historian as an "ingenious but unhappy young man, who consumed a vast estate."

Colonel Graham was keeper of the privy purse to James II., and one of his most trusted servants; he had previously held the same office for the Duchess of York, who had been Mary of Modena. The Colonel accompanied King James in his flight to Rochester, and a most interesting paper remains at Levens, endorsed by Grahme "The King's reasons for leaving," in which is set forth at some length in the King's own handwriting his reasons for leaving the country. Together with this is a letter from Sir Stephen Fox to Mrs. Grahme describing the flight. The Colonel's picture by Lely, and that of his wife, Dorothy

Howard, Maid of Honour to Queen Catherine of Braganza, hang in the south drawing-room. Horace Walpole describes him as a fashionable man in his day and noted for his dry humour. He was a staunch Jacobite, and Levens appears to have been in his day a centre of treasonable plottings. A large mass of correspondence, much of which is in cypher, the keys to which are luckily preserved, remains in the house, including letters from the Duke of Hamilton, Bolingbroke, Godolphin, Ken, Atterbury, Kettlewall, etc. In spite of his Jacobite proclivities, Graham was returned at first for Appleby, and later for the county in every Parliament from 1702 to 1722. He made considerable alterations at Levens, his principal work being the large staircase leading out of the hall, and the extension and improvement of the gardens. His only living child and heiress married her first cousin, Henry Howard, fourth Earl of Berkshire, who succeeded him at Levens in 1722. The Earl's eldest son, Lord Andover, was killed while out hunting, and his widow lived at Levens till she was succeeded by her only surviving daughter and heiress, who married Richard Bagot, a son of Sir Walter Bagot of Blithfield, brother of the first Lord Bagot, who assumed the name of Howard, and brought this fine old house into the family of the present owner, Colonel Josceline Bagot, who is one of the M.P.'s for Westmorland, as have been various owners of Levens in every century since 1315.