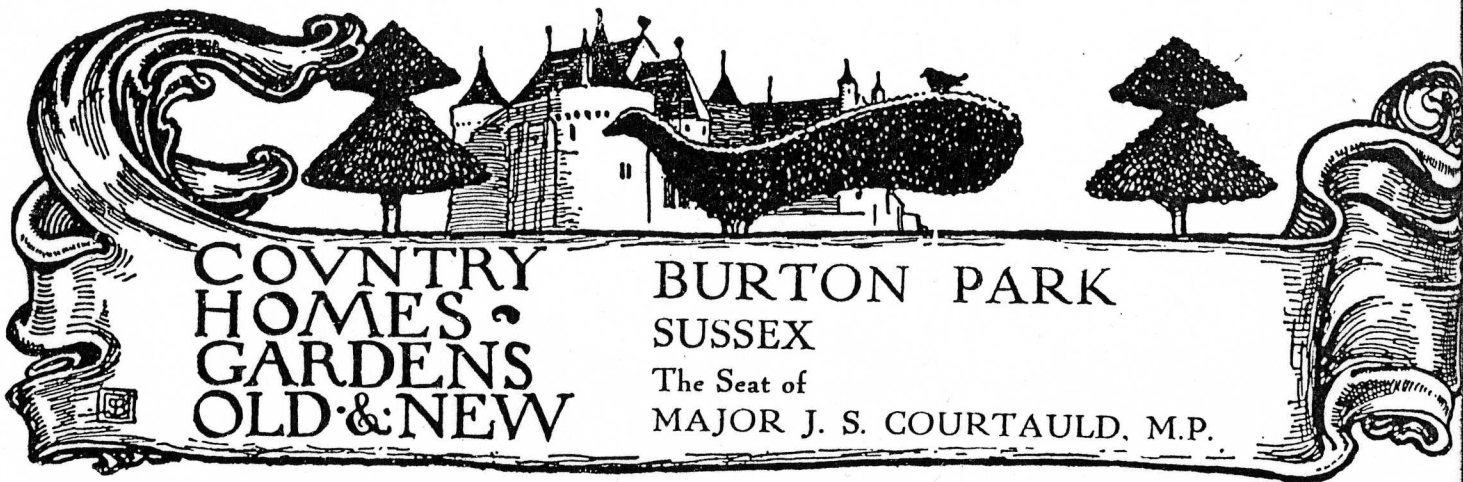




Anciently the home of the Goring and Biddulph families, the present house, built circa 1828 and here ascribed to Sir Robert Smirke, is the third on the site. Particularly charming gardens have been formed since 1920.

MIDWAY between Petworth and Duncton the park of Bodekton or Burton lies towards the downs that rise just southwards into Duncton and Bignor Hills. It is one of the pleasantest parks in West Sussex, that includes those of Arundel and Petworth and Cowdray and Goodwood. If it cannot equal those magnificent enclosures in extent, it must be nearly as old as they—a great

deal older than Goodwood—and it can show oaks as venerable as any in the country (Fig. 14). In the valley that bounds to the south is a string of lakes with wooded shores, which are no doubt the fish-ponds mentioned in Domesday as paying an annual rent of 280 eels. With its gardens sloping down to the lakes, the early nineteenth century house is adjoined, a few yards northwards, by the tiny church from which the village, if ever there was one, has long since faded away, leaving it isolated in the park.

The ancient trees, the tombs of the Goring family in the little church, the ancestral character of the park as a whole all speak of a long history. When Major and Mrs. Courtauld came to Burton nearly twenty years ago, neglect had impaired both house and grounds. Since then, skill and imagination have been brought to bear, so that the house, in austere classic lines unchanged, has become as charming a home as one can find, set in gardens of unusual beauty. Major Courtauld's early training as an architect served him well in the application of these considerable alterations, supplemented by Mrs. Courtauld's zest and taste as a gardener. The result is a sunny, spacious home essentially of to-day, although the furnishings draw upon the past, and such features as the remarkable staircase (Fig. 10) and ground-floor corridor (Fig. 13) show that we have to deal with an interesting and uncommon example of late classic architecture.

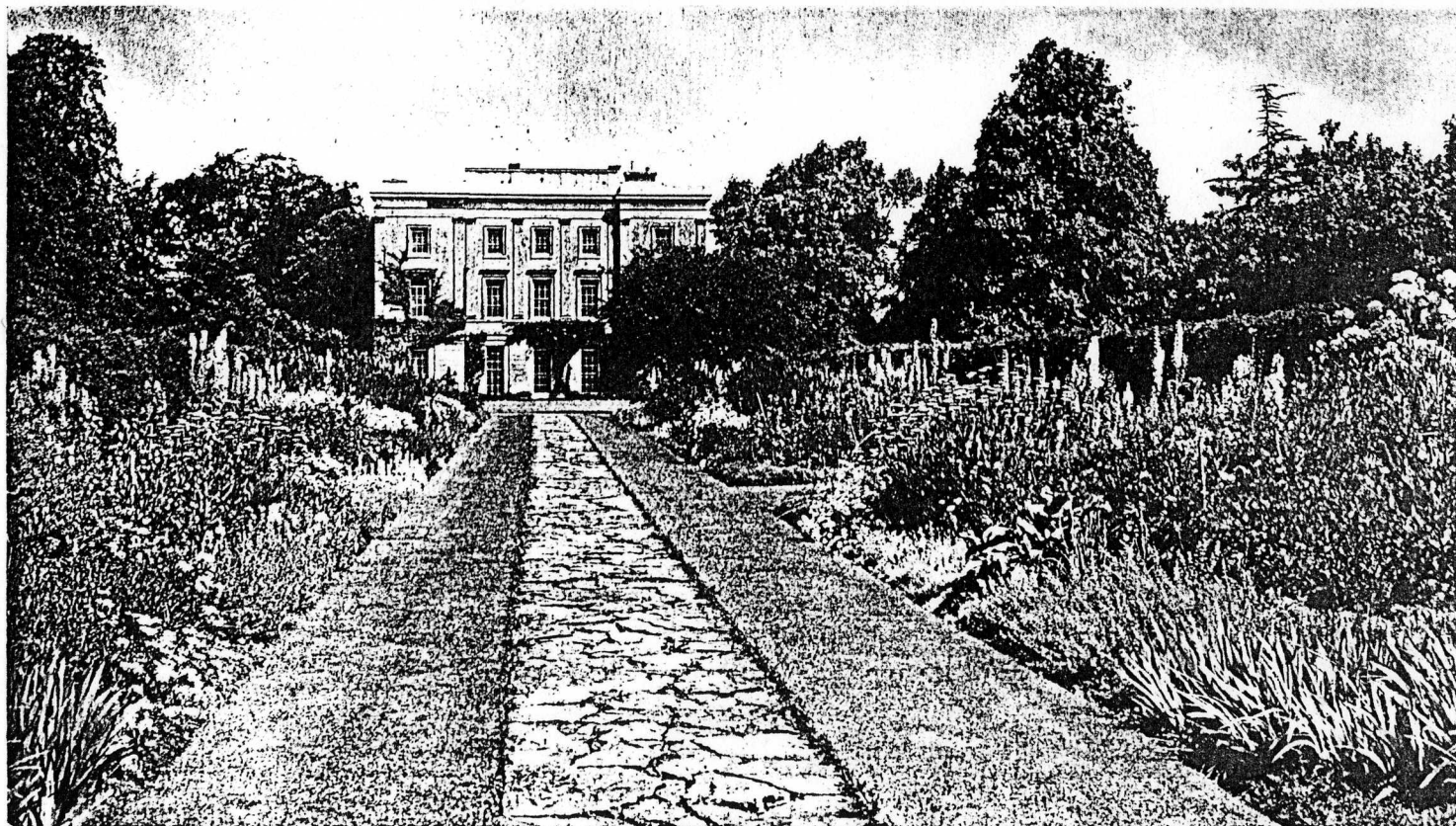
The existing house is at least the third, and probably the least important, that has stood in the park. Two notable families, the Gorings and then the Biddulphs, had their principal home in its predecessors. The park may well owe its origin to Sir William Dawtry, who had free warren in Barlavington in 1242, and held adjoining land in "Bodekton" (Bodeca's tun). From him the property descended to Sir Edward St. John of Barlavington (*temp.* Edward II and III), and through Constantia, the heiress of Henry Dyke (*circa* 1500), to John Goring, who died in 1520. The Gorings, who took their name from the



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1.—A CHARMING "REGENCY" FACADE—THE WEST FRONT



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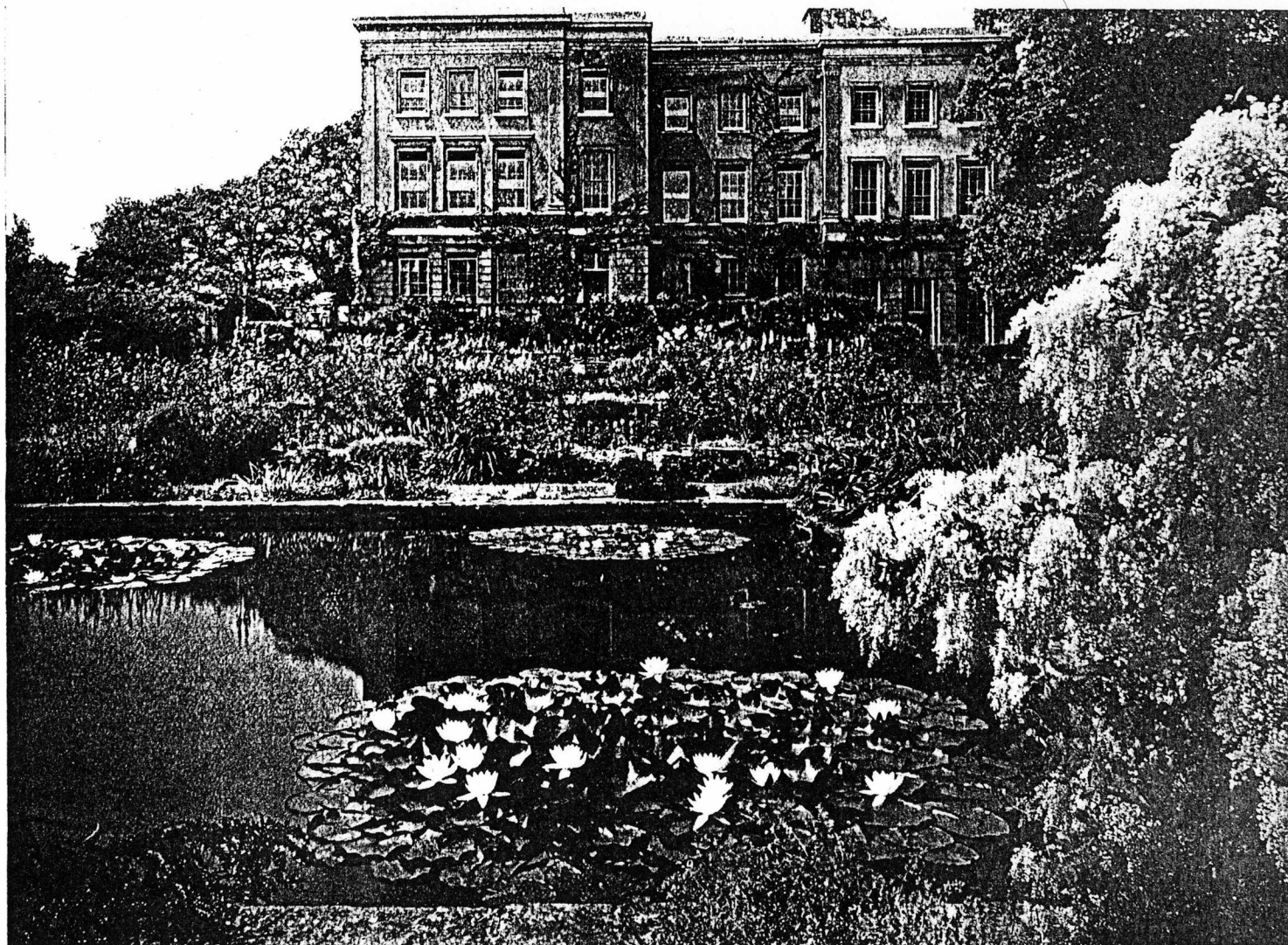
2.—LOOKING BACK TO THE SOUTH FRONT UP THE BORDERS

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seaside hamlet, were of Lancing in Lancastrian times. Sir William Goring, son of Constantia and John, rose to prominence in Reformation days, being a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber to Edward VI. He married a Covert of Slaughtam, and died in 1553, when a canopied tomb was erected in Burton church. He it was, no doubt, who built a mansion that was destroyed by fire in 1739 and which is thought to have stood westwards of the existing house. The Tudor house was replaced by one designed by Giacomo Leoni, which gave place to the present house *circa* 1828. Sir William Goring had two sons, the elder of whom transmitted Burton to a line of successors; the youngest

establishing the Ovingdean and Hurstpierpoint line, of which the third generation produced George Goring, Earl of Norwich, the Royalist general and builder of Goring House, the first residence on the site of Buckingham Palace.

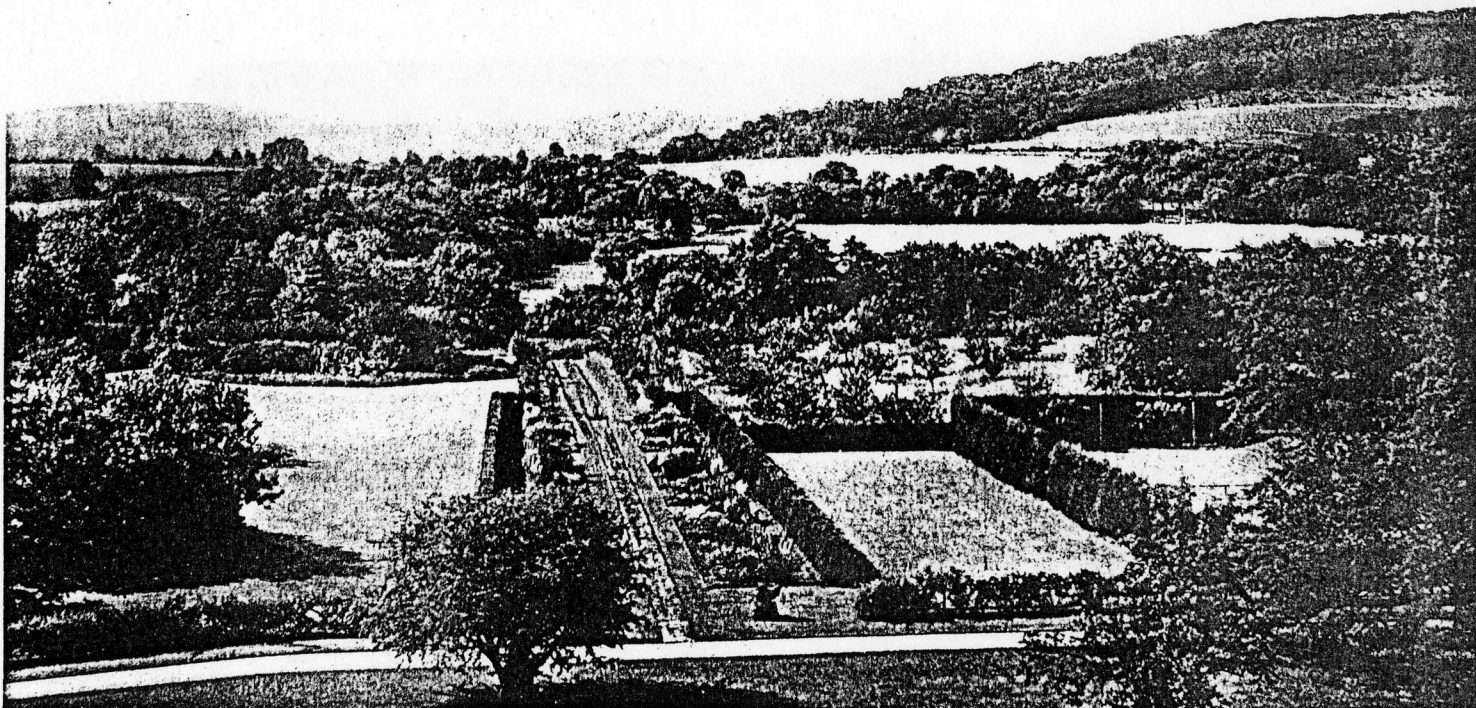
The Gorings of Burton were worthy knights and, later, baronets, and clung to the old creed. The last of them, Sir William, who died without children in 1724, married a Plowden of Plowden, and his only sister Ann wedded Richard Biddulph of Biddulph, Staffordshire, of another old Roman Catholic family. The Biddulphs of Ledbury, and of Westcombe, descend from the same stock as John Biddulph, Ann Goring's



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3.—ACROSS THE POOL TO THE TERRACES AND EAST SIDE

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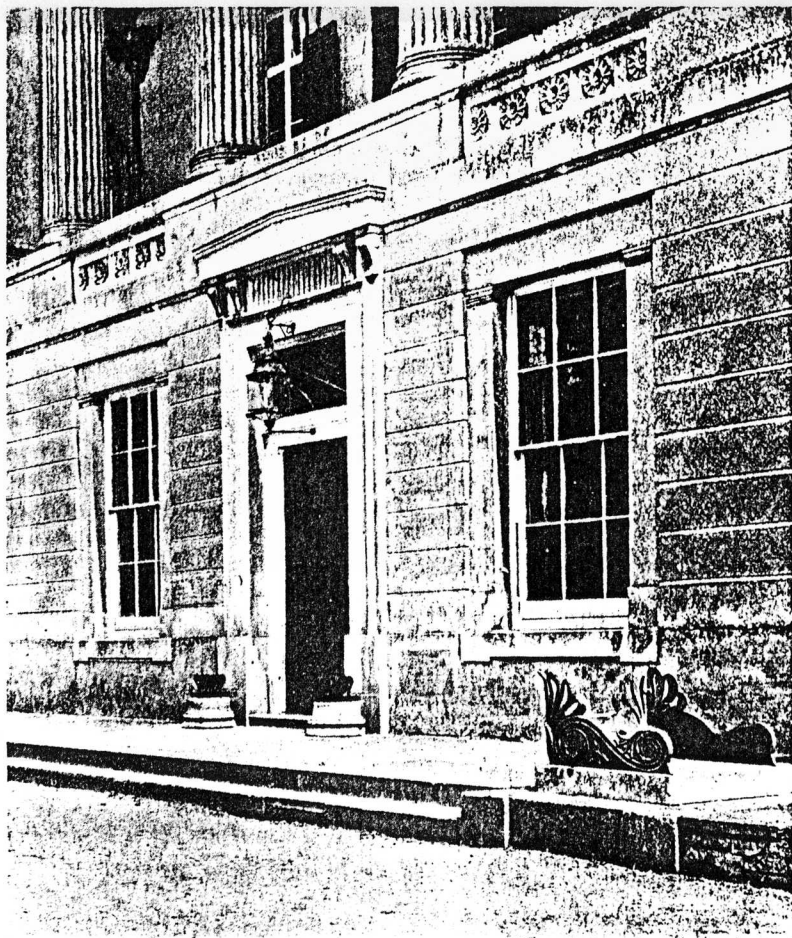
4.—THE BORDERS AND THE SOUTH DOWNS, FROM AN UPPER WINDOW "Country Life"

son, who succeeded to Burton. It will have been in his time, or that of his son Richard, that the Tudor house was burnt. Richard, who eventually died unmarried in 1767, seems to have been one of the *dilettanti* of his age: in the house that he built used to hang a portrait of the Earl of Burlington, and it was in the style favoured by that nobleman that he re-built Burton. A print and particulars of the Georgian house are given in Neale's *Views of Seats*, 1824. It had a stone front of thirteen windows, 173ft. long with a rusticated ground floor, projecting centre surmounted by a pediment, and terminal divisions. It was not regarded as one of Leoni's best works, but compares quite favourably with his surviving designs of Moor Park and Lyme. The Italian usage was followed in having the *piano nobile* on the first floor, where there were a great drawing-room and saloon; there was no attic storey.

Richard was succeeded by his brother Charles, who had married a Bedingfield of Oxburgh. Their son and successor,

John Biddulph, died unmarried in 1835, soon after building the existing house. According to Dallaway's *Rape of Arundel*, 1832, the Leoni building "was partly burnt down by accident in 1826 and a new house has lately been erected in which the hall and some of the rooms of the west end have been preserved."

Re-built in the neo-Grec style, Burton is an oblong, with its length running north and south, entered in the centre of the west side (Fig. 1), and with its south end widened to form the south front by a short wing projecting eastwards (this is seen on the left of Fig. 3). Dallaway's note is useful as establishing roughly the date of the present house; but, although he wrote so soon after the event, he seems to have confused his points of the compass. From the evidence of foundations found west of the existing building, it must have been the east, not the west, end of the Leoni house that was incorporated; moreover, the ground slopes considerably immediately to the east



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5.—FRONT DOOR AND A MAJESTIC BOOT-SCRAPER

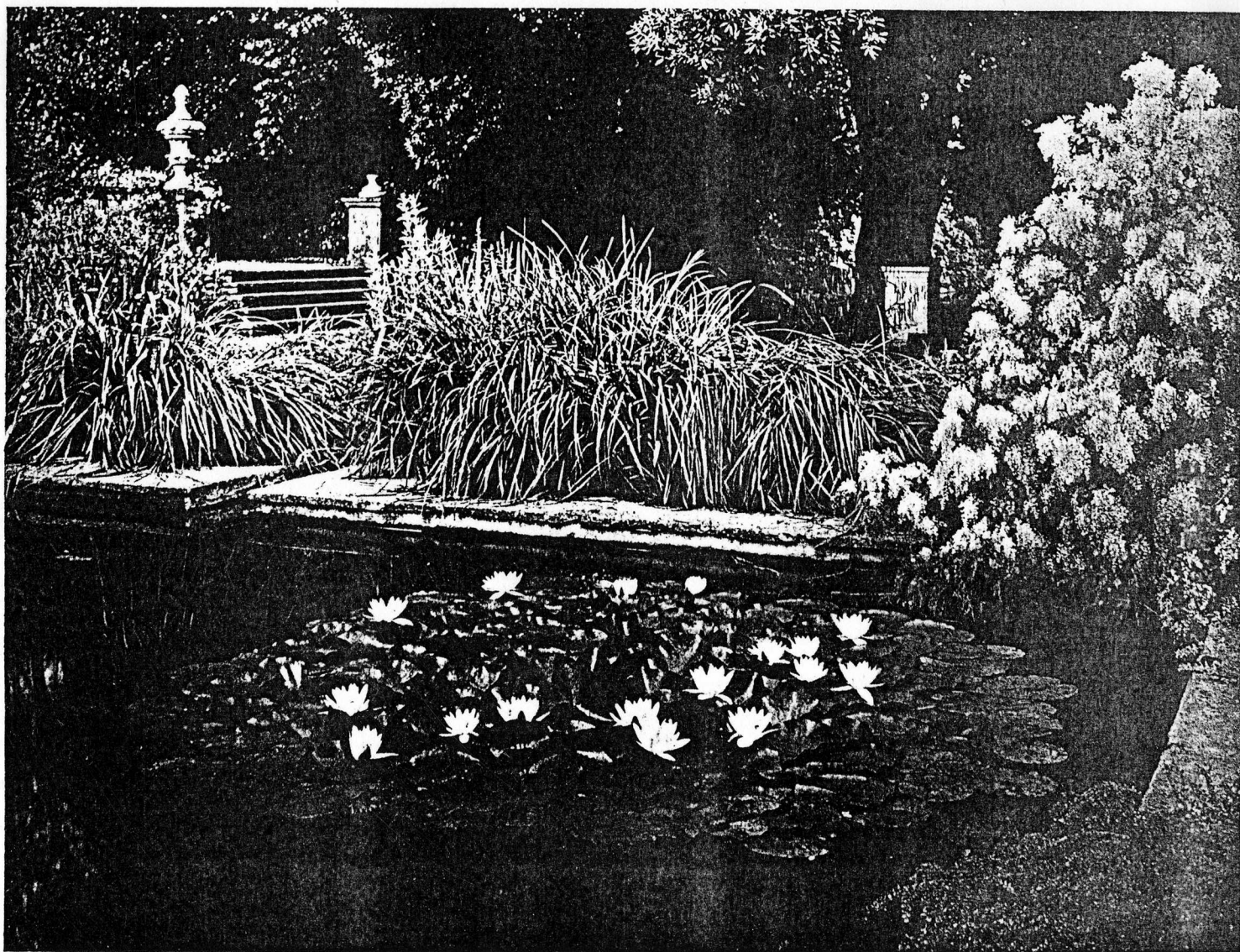


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6.—IN THE ILEX GROVE

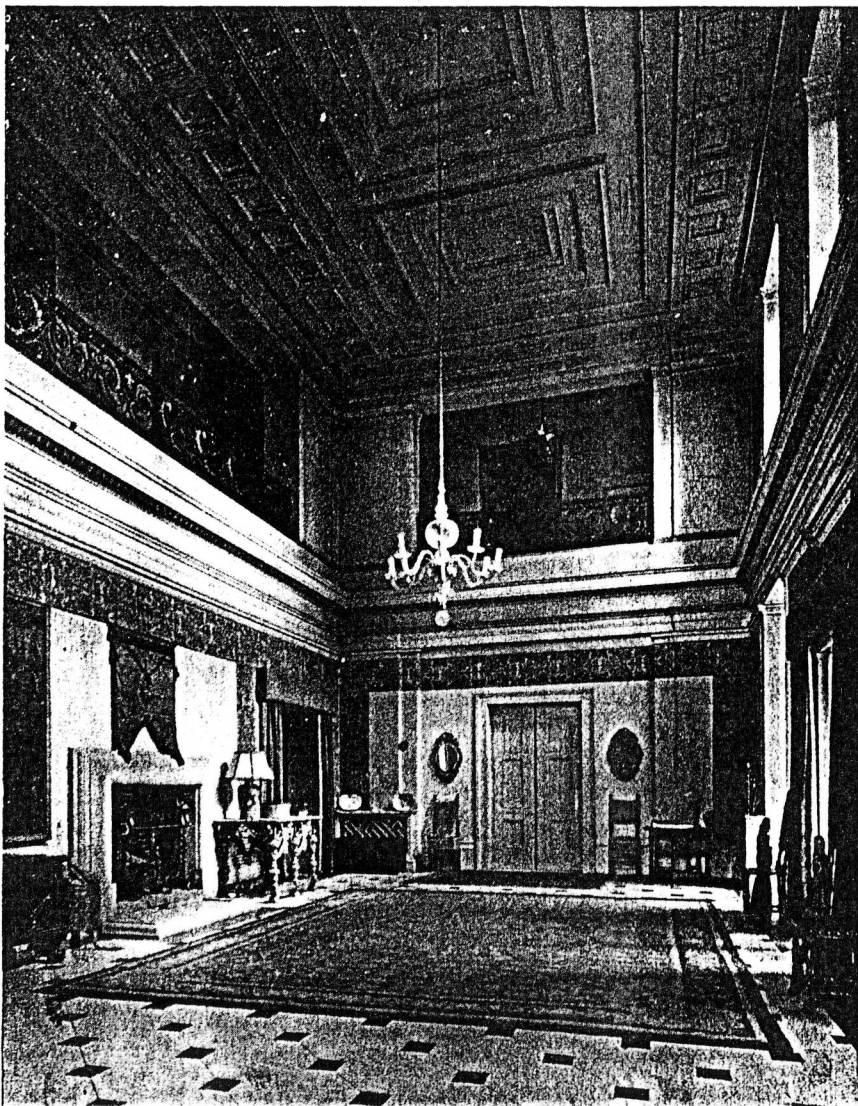


7.—THE ROSE GARDEN BELOW THE EAST TERRACE. Paul's Scarlet trained over horizontal trellis



8.—A CORNER OF THE FORMAL POOL BELOW THE ROSE GARDEN

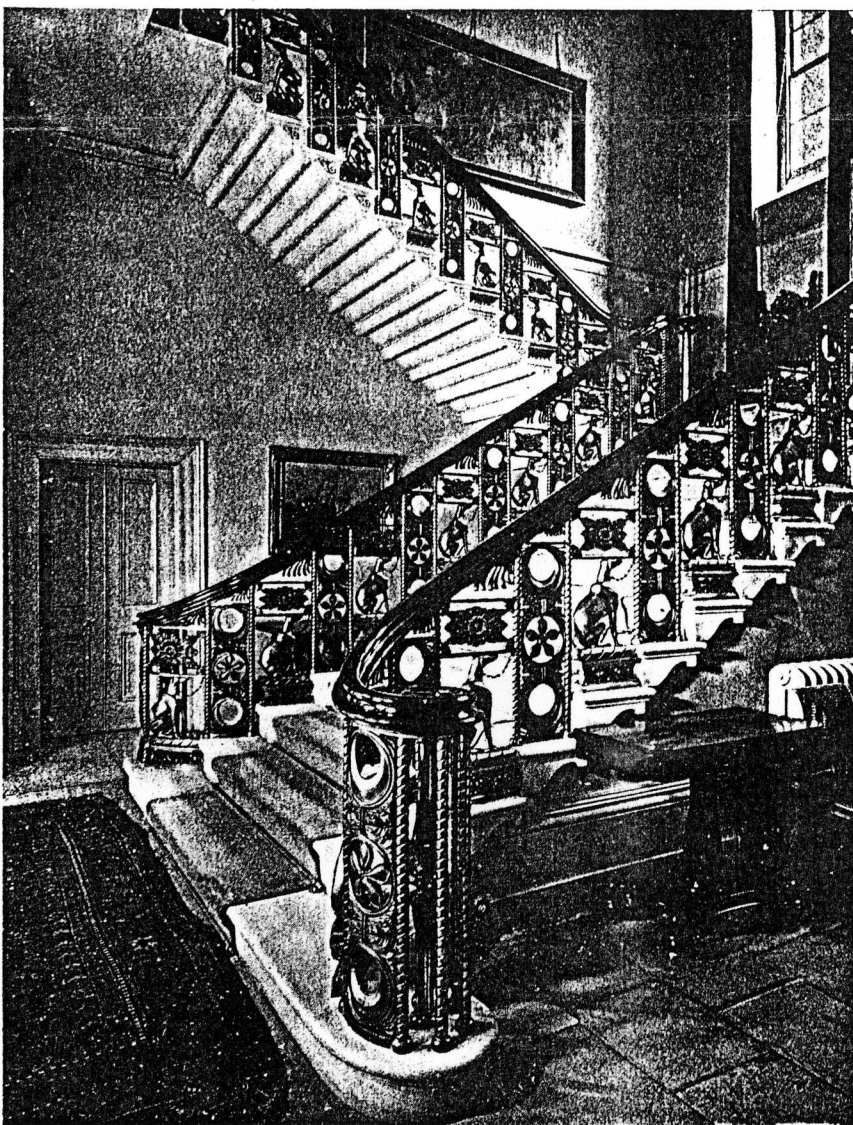
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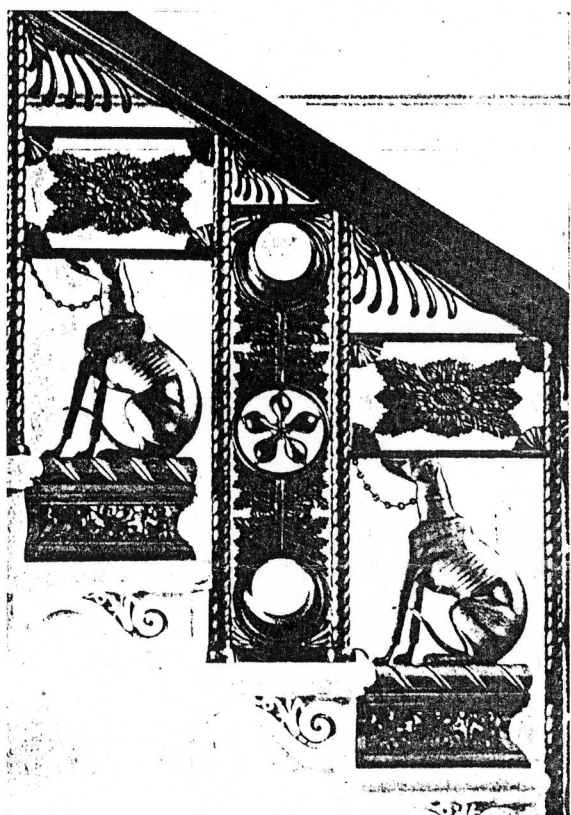
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9.—THE GRECIAN HALL

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10.—THE BRONZE STAIRCASE. Circa 1800
Brought from Michelgrove

of the house, discountenancing the likelihood of the Georgian house having stretched farther in that direction. We may accept, for lack of evidence to the contrary, the retention of the Georgian hall remodelled in the Grecian style (Fig. 9) and occupying the centre of the present west front, although it is difficult to see how it can have formed part of Leoni's long south-facing design. It is a pity that Dallaway did not mention the name of the architect. The style suggests Sir Robert Smirke, at that time engaged on his best known work, the British Museum; and the Grecian style adopted is reminiscent of such other buildings by Smirke as the Royal College of Physicians and the old Union Club (now the Dominion of Canada building) in Trafalgar Square, and the Royal College of Surgeons in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The entry front is a fine composition with its bold Ionic order (like that of the British Museum) and delicate detail. The interiors, except for the hall and a vaulted ground-floor corridor, have been largely redecorated. Indeed, the plan of the house as Major Courtauld found it certainly needed alteration, since the remarkable bronze staircase, now at the north end of the hall, was formerly at the



11.—DETAIL OF THE STAIRCASE

opposite end, occupying most of the south windows, where now a delightful long drawing-room (Fig. 12) with bedrooms above have been inserted.

The staircase (Fig. 10) presents a problem. It is a wonderful example of cast and wrought bronze, and employs as its principal decoration a succession of greyhounds chained to a support. The tradition is that the staircase was brought from Michelgrove, near Arundel. Late in the eighteenth century Sir John Shelley demolished the Tudor home of his family and built, "at vast cost," says Dallaway, "a spacious and elegant mansion in the Gothic style embellished in the most florid taste," the cost of which was too great for him, since he sold Michelgrove in 1800 to Richard Walker—a member of the well known Liverpool family. This staircase must have been inserted at Michelgrove by the Walkers, for it is their crest that is introduced into the decoration: a greyhound sejant *ar.* collared and charged on the shoulder with a cinquefoil *sa.* Their arms include the crescent that is also introduced into the balustrade. In 1828 Richard Watt Walker sold Michelgrove to the Duke of Norfolk who forthwith demolished the house.

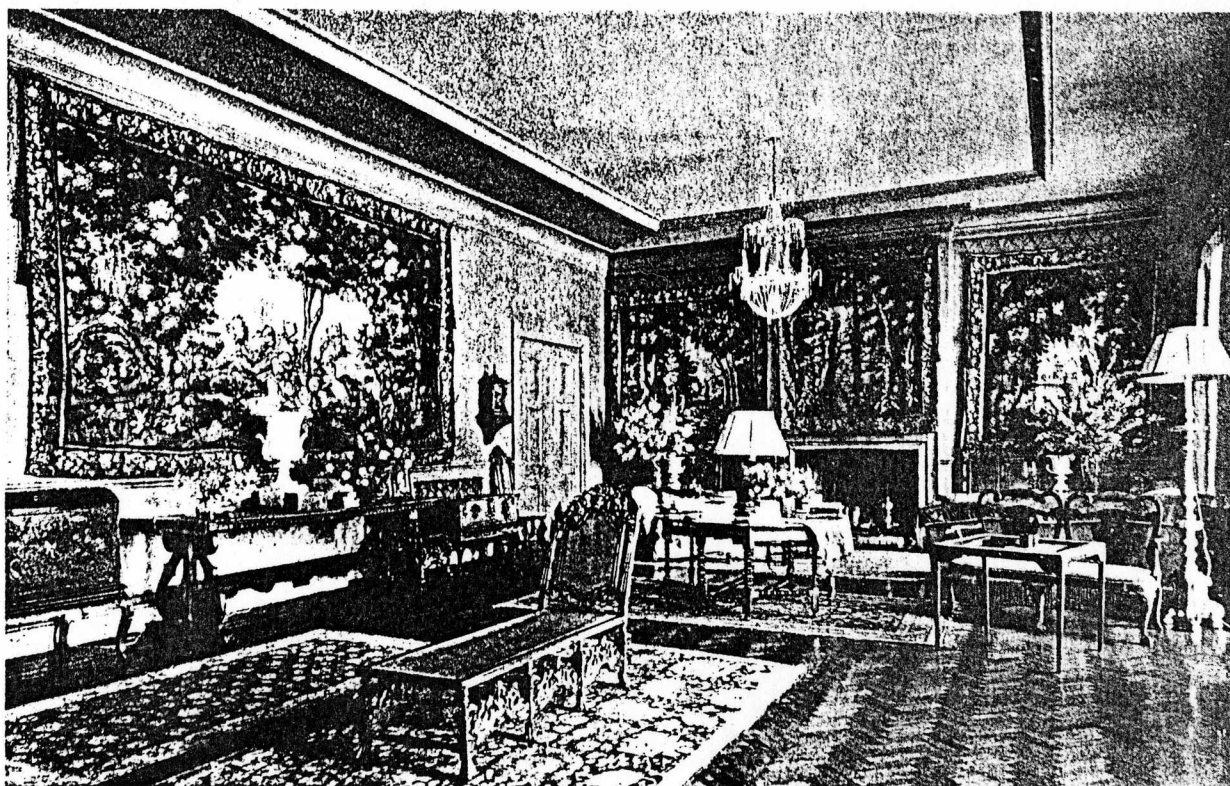
John Biddulph, who re-built Burton, died unmarried in 1835, when the place went to a descendant of an aunt, in the person of Anthony Wright-Biddulph of Wielside, Essex. Towards

the end of last century the property was bought, by Sir Douglas Hall, and was frequently let, being purchased by Major Courtauld in 1919.

The drawing-room, occupying most of the south front, has a range of windows with their sills sunk to ground level, its sage green walls hung with dark verdure tapestries. Against these the great vases of flowers that Mrs. Courtauld always has in the room are effectively shown up. The system of lighting is an ingenious variation on the cornice principle—tubes concealed in the ceiling moulding that throw the light on to the tapestries, supplemented by standard lamps. Mrs. Courtauld's room in the remainder of the south front, the dining-room and the smoking room looking east do not call for detailed comment beyond that they are charming, spacious rooms, delightfully furnished.

It is the gardens that are the particular attraction of Burton. Southwards, towards the Downs, beyond a broad lawn, a deep double border backed by hedges leads to the nut walk that descends to the wooded lake. On either side of the nut walk the slope is treated as a rock garden with broad effects of colour rather than as a repository for rarities.

The east front of the house is curiously irregular. It has been successfully dealt with by means of a broad paved terrace on two levels, below which is a rose garden (Fig. 7), and below that again a formal pool (Fig. 3). The rose garden is a first-rate example of massing for colour, Paul's Scarlet being trained over a low trellis-work that, during the summer, is a solid sheet of colour. The roses are under-planted with



12.—THE DRAWING-ROOM

Sage green walls and verdure tapestries provide an ideal back-ground for bold arrangements of flowers

pinks and dwarf alpine phlox that overflow on to the paved paths. Similarly the formal lines of the pool are softened with bold plantings of such things as *Spiraea Aitchisoni*, seen to perfection in Fig. 8 against the black shade of an ilex grove, flowering rushes, prostrate cotoneaster, English lavender, and so on. Whether seen from the terrace above or across the pool below, these plats are admirable instances of the clothing of formal lines with colour and mass. Beyond the pool, the area densely shaded by a group of ilexes has been paved, a water runnel trickling through it round the base of a well placed classical statue (Fig. 6), beyond which again is the old walled garden of the Georgian house, now requisitioned as a cutting garden for flowers. Returning right-handed to the long borders, one passes through an effective rose pergola between the piers of which are solid plantings of delphiniums. At the end of the lake a grove has been devoted to rhododendrons where an interesting selection of species are flourishing in ideal conditions.

CHRISTOPHER HUSSEY.



13.—GREEK CLASSICISM IN A CORRIDOR



14.—OLD OAKS IN THE PARK