



THE OLD HALL AT MICKLEOVER, NEAR DERBY.

Ramblings of an Antiquary.

“THE OLD HALL AT MICKLEOVER.”

BY GEORGE BAILEY in *The Antiquary*, February, 1902.

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R. BAILEY commences the story of his ramblings with a description of a little-known hall at Mickleover, within three or four miles of his home at Derby.

That he is no mean artist of his subject will be apparent from his illustrations, which accompany this review, and which are printed from blocks kindly lent by Mr. Elliot Stock, the publisher of *The Antiquary*. The author takes us through the picturesque half-timbered house, which, he tells us, is still in

NISI DEVS FRVSTRA 1648

Fig. 2.—Inscription on the lintel, Mickleover Hall.

excellent preservation. We pass between imposing gate-posts of characteristic design, and facing us is the quaint porch, with its very uncommon feature of balustered and open sides. On the lintel, deeply cut in solid oak, is the inscription “NISI DEVS FRVSTRA 1648 ✚” (fig. 2), which, as Mr. Bailey reminds us, also occurs on the battlements of Castle Ashby. Crossing the inner threshold, we enter what, originally, had been the hall, for on the right is the handsome oak staircase, and

opposite us is the old fireplace, "6 ft. 7 ins. by 5 ft. 4 ins. deep" (fig. 3). "Two rooms open into the hall: one now used as the kitchen has "the usual old-time . . . chimney and

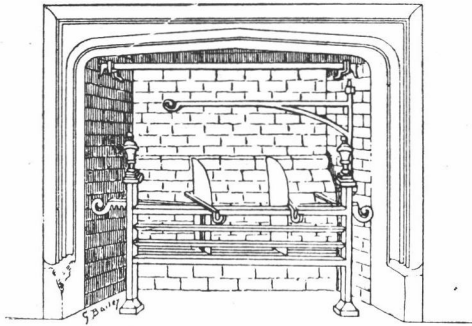


Fig. 3.—Fireplace, Mickleover Hall.

ingle nook"; the other, which is panelled with oak, has a fireplace similar to that in the hall, but the base of the stonework frame is rather more elaborately moulded. Above it is

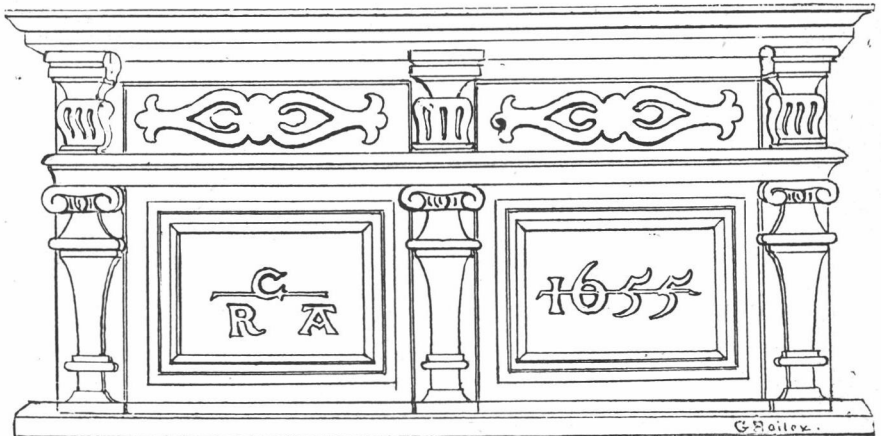


Fig. 4.—Mantelpiece, Mickleover Hall.

the neatly-designed mantelpiece (fig. 4), bearing the letters "C RA" (although the upper letter may be "G"), and the date 1655. "From the arrangement of the brickwork it can be seen

that alterations and adaptations have from time to time been made, and the question arises, can these apartments have belonged to a larger house which was adapted to the requirements of later times?" If Mr. Bailey has in mind a hall of larger dimensions at some period prior to 1648, we should reply in the affirmative, because the massing of the chimneys and the stonework of the fireplaces are indicative of earlier date. Of the latter, counterparts may be seen at Haddon and at the Chetham College, Manchester. These alterations were probably completed at the date given on the porch, when, in all likelihood, some weather-beaten quadrangular building was reduced to its present form and thoroughly restored. That there was a hall at Mickleover before 1648 seems certain, for in 1601 "Richard Harper, of Mickleover, gentleman," contributed fifteen shillings as a levy for three horsemen towards an expedition to Ireland.

Mr. Bailey regrets that he is not able to give any reliable account of the ancient owners of the Hall. He, however, connects the inscription over the porch with the execution of King Charles I. on January 30th, 1649, or, as he correctly points out, 1648 under the old style. He also suggests that the letter "c" on the over-mantel may be the initial of Charles, Cromwell, or Curzon, but prefers to allocate it to Cromwell, "for about that time he received the title of Lord Protector of the Commonwealth." From these coincidences he ventures the assumption "that the builder of this house wished to make it tell a tale of the times." But we hesitate.

In some future number of the *Journal* we hope to deal with the history of Mickleover and its owners more in detail, but no better description of the quaint old hall itself could be desired than that so carefully written and pleasingly illustrated by Mr. Bailey in the pages of *The Antiquary*.