



**C**OLLETON BARTON, in the parish of Chulmleigh in North Devon, is a charming specimen of a residence of one of the smaller gentle families of the West. It was the residence of the Burys from the reign of Richard II, at which period it passed into their hands through marriage with the heiress of Cole. A tragic story attaches to one John Bury in the reign of Elizabeth. He was the son of Richard Bury and Elizabeth, daughter of Sir Hugh Pollard, and was but three years old on the death of his father in 1543. His mother was a scheming woman, and married him when only thirteen to Wilmot, daughter and heiress of John Giffard of Yeo, who was even younger. John seems to have been somewhat weak intellectually; Wilmot sued for a divorce, and pleaded that she had been married to John Bury "contrary to the laws of God and the Ecclesiastical canons, I was in my tender years unfortunately married." The divorce was pronounced by Archbishop Parker July 22, 1560. It would seem that John's brother, Hugh, who was living in Colleton, imprisoned him then in a sort of dungeon beside the entrance gate, in which was no fireplace, but a small window. How long he was thus confined is not known, nor how he contrived his escape; but escape he

did, and without the privity of his brother, who was his junior, married a daughter of one Mountjoy, and by her had a son Humphry. So far is certain, but, according to local tradition, Hugh managed again to secure the person of his brother, and once more to confine him in the prison chamber, where he was found one morning hanging dead from a nail in the wall.

Hugh continued to enjoy the property, which he grievously wasted, and sold off considerable portions. But so soon as Humphry came of age he took steps to dislodge his uncle, who seems to have been kept unaware of his existence, and sued for the recovery of his land. After much difficulty in proving the validity of the divorce and of the remarriage of his father, Humphry was completely successful, and was able as well to recover the lands which Hugh had illegally sold. The Burys remained in Colleton till Thomas, the last of the family, died in 1804; then his widow gave the estate to Captain Richard Inledon, R.N., who assumed the name of Bury. This gentleman died Vice-Admiral of the White in 1825, leaving two daughters. One, Penelope, married the Rev. John Russell, the hunting parson, who managed to run through her property; in a word, it went to the dogs, and Colleton was sold. For some

time it was a farmhouse, and was sadly deteriorated. Some of the stone mullioned windows were altered into sash windows, the rich oak carved panelling was painted over, and the long dresser-table, of which we give a representation, was turned into a carpenter's bench. Happily, the present proprietor, Mr. W. P. Martyn, has restored it admirably.

The house was built mainly by the very Humphry Bury who recovered the estate from his uncle. The date in the dining-room is 1612. But the gate-house is earlier, and it was in the basement of this gate-house, in the cellar under the chapel, that his father was confined, and, if the story be true, hanged himself. The *corps de logis* consists of the usual E shape, with porch and west wing containing the drawing-room and the hall. The eastern member is extended, to contain cellars and servants' apartments. In the earlier house there was probably a quadrangle, to which access could only be obtained through the gate-house. This gate-house, with the chapel above it, dates from early in the fifteenth century, as the chapel was dedicated to St. Edmund (Rich), Archbishop of Canterbury, by Bishop Stafford, who licensed it July 6th, 1402. It was again licensed in 1413 that John Rashleigh, clerk, might minister in it. There is very fine plasterwork in the ceilings of both the dining-room and the drawing-room. The latter is panelled with carved oak and adorned with coats of arms of the Bury family and its alliances. The arms of the Burys are: *Ermines, on a bend engrailed az., three fleurs-de-lys, or.*

Among the coats will be noticed that of Stukley, for Humphry, the builder, who died in 1631, had married a daughter of John Stukley of Heton, so that he obtained the unenviable privilege of having "lusty Stukley" as his



Copyright

FIRE DOGS AT COLLETON.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

uncle, and of having as his nephew an even blacker villain, Sir Lewis, nicknamed "Judas" Stukley, for having betrayed his kinsman, Sir Walter Raleigh, to his death. Sir Lewis, an outcast from society in London, went down to Affeton. But even there he was ill-received by his kinsmen and retainers. The gentry would not speak to him. The brand of Cain was on him, and he fled from the society of his

fellow men to the Isle of Lundy, where he died a raving maniac.

Colleton is a barton. The manor, as part of the barony of Okehampton, belonged to the Courtenays. The story goes that a certain Countess of Devon one day encountered a poor man on his way to the river, the Little Dart, carrying a covered basket. She asked what it contained, and was told that in it were seven puppies, which were to be drowned. On raising the lid she saw, to her surprise, that these puppies were seven male babes, whom the poor man's wife had borne at a birth. The Countess at once took possession of the infants and reared them to become priests, and for their benefit founded seven prebends in the church of Chulmleigh. Precisely the same story is told of Tiverton; and, indeed, in Germany it is held to account for the origin of the Guelf stock—raised from seven sons called by their father whelps. In Wales, again, we meet with the tale in the legend of the Dyfrwyr—the watermen—who, all seven, have been placed in the category of the saints.

On the further side of the river Taw is another very interesting house, that of Rashleigh, the ancestral seat of the family of that name. It has come to be used as a farmhouse, and is less attractive externally than Colleton; but it even surpasses it in the richness and variety of its plasterwork. Rashleigh was the dwelling