

A CLASSIFICATION OF TUDOR DOMESTIC
WALL-PAINTINGS

By FRANCIS W. READER

PART I

In my previous papers on the wall-paintings of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries no attempt was made to deal with the various purely ornamental examples, other than renaissance, although several recent discoveries of other styles have been described and figured. The preponderance of renaissance, in this collation, so far, may therefore give a wrong impression. The reason for this omission is that, until recent years, too few of such works had been recorded to warrant any general survey.

Throughout the nineteenth century, discoveries of figure subjects and renaissance ornament only were recorded. Naturally the human interest of figure subjects would make a wide appeal even to the unlearned, while the costumes would leave little doubt as to their period. Renaissance ornament, with its curious 'grotesques,' was perhaps sufficiently striking to attract the notice of the workmen who discovered it, as presenting something different from what they were accustomed to see in wall decoration. Antiquaries also seem generally to have understood the period of such works, and seized the opportunity of attributing them to Holbein or some other distinguished foreign artist, with that peculiar passion for depreciating their native artists, that has possessed Englishmen ever since the time of Henry VIII.

The more numerous paintings in other styles appear to have been too difficult of recognition by the workmen, who might hardly be expected to distinguish them from old wall-papers. Indeed, even among ordinarily well-informed people, few have sufficient knowledge of historic ornament to venture on an opinion of such works, and find their destruction the easiest escape from a dilemma, the usual justification being, 'It was only old ornament.' In this age

of mechanism ornament has come to be regarded as merely a commodity made by a machine and procurable at so much a yard.

It was not until 1911 that wall-painting of this nature received any adequate recognition, when Miller Christy and Guy Maynard collected all examples that they could then find in Essex,¹ which although only some eight in number, were well figured by drawings and photographs, some of which were in colour. This paper appears to have so greatly stimulated observation in Essex, that the number of recorded examples has since risen to no less than eighty, which considerably exceeds the figure of any other county. This not only shows how interest in the subject has grown, but also indicates how much has been lost by past neglect, and is still being lost in many districts through lack of observation.

A more comprehensive account of such paintings, by P. M. Johnston, appeared in 1931, in which are enumerated some twenty examples that had come to the notice of the writer in Sussex, Surrey, Kent, Suffolk, Wilts., Warwick and Oxon, several being illustrated by photographs.² Valuable as these contributions are, the number of examples dealt with is far too few to allow of much more than their record.

More recently many discoveries have been reported in the Transactions of various Archaeological Societies, and other journals, while many portions of the painted plaster, as well as drawings and photographs, have been added to our museum collections. In this way recorded discoveries of these works have now grown from little more than a dozen at the beginning of this century to over three hundred. Although many of these records are of too indefinite a nature to be very helpful and full particulars of others have been difficult to obtain, a sufficiently large number has now accumulated to admit of some classification. They exhibit an extraordinary diversity, and some local characteristics, while they have evidently been derived from a variety of sources, the origin of which it may be of interest to trace, or at least to speculate upon.

Without any idea of finality, I propose to divide them into the following nine classes :

¹ *Essex Arch. Trans.*, n.s., xii, 23-37.

² *J.B.A.A.*, n.s., xxxvii, 75-100.

Figure Subjects, and Imitation Tapestry.
 Arcaded Façades.
 Geometrical.
 Imitation Panelling.
 Renaissance.
 Brocade, or Highly Conventional.
 Naturalistic, or Slightly Conventional.
 Mooresque.
 Heraldic and Miscellaneous.

Some of these terms may be open to objection, but have been adopted owing to their having become established by use, and are convenient as being generally understood. In many cases these classes overlap, making it difficult to decide their allocation, while some sub-division is also necessary. These points will be discussed as each class is considered in detail.

FIGURE SUBJECTS AND IMITATION TAPESTRY

Figure subjects have already received attention at some length, and many have been figured.¹ It has frequently been suggested that these were copies of tapestry. While it is possible that some may have had such an origin, there seems little in the character of most of them to give support to this suggestion, which may have arisen from the popular idea that tapestry was the general medium of decoration in all houses of the sixteenth century.

Tapestry was the most highly esteemed of textile hangings, and was mainly imported from France and Flanders. Owing to its great cost, it could only have been general in the houses of the wealthy classes.

Discarded specimens might occasionally have found their way into the lesser houses, like that instanced by Shakespeare² in a modest inn. Its condition, stigmatized by Falstaff as 'these fly-bitten tapestries' indicates that it had seen better days elsewhere.

Besides tapestry, many other fabrics were used as hangings, particularly the 'painted' or 'stained cloth,' which was a cheap substitute for tapestry. The popularity of painted cloths with the traders,

¹ *Arch. Journ.*, lxxxix, xcii, and xciii.

² *Henry IV*, Part II, Act ii, scene 2.

yeoman-farmers and others who shared the prosperity of the period, is shown by the frequent allusion to them in literature, and by their mention in old wills.

Painting directly on the wall was apparently the most general method of wall decoration and was employed even in many of the larger houses, although mostly in the less important rooms. In its simplest form, as carried out by the local decorator of country districts, which is represented by the majority of the examples that have survived, it was, no doubt, the cheapest method besides being the most durable. When, however, wall-paintings were employed by rich corporations of a large city, and the work was entrusted to some artist of repute, as when Holbein was commissioned to make two large paintings for the Hall of the Steelyard, in London, it could hardly have been an inexpensive matter. In such cases, the artist employed would doubtless only prepare the design while the work would be carried out by competent wall-painters.

In the same way tapestry needed the services of an artist-painter to make the design from which the weavers worked, the essential difference being that tapestry is a work complete in itself, not necessarily designed for any particular position, and movable at will, precisely as are our easel-pictures.

With wall-painting, the spaces and architectural features were considered, and the design was adapted and modified accordingly. Figure subjects were usually treated in a series of episodes from some well-known story, ranged round the room in the main space on eye level, known as the filling, the scenes merely divided from each other by a classic column. They were surmounted by a frieze, and rested on a dado, which was often of wainscot. This scheme, with slight variations, was the general rule followed by the painter. His work became part of the wall itself, from which it was inseparable. It was in no way regarded as an appendage needing a frame, or border to disconnect it from its surroundings, as did tapestry and painted cloth.

For a long period the 'Stainers' carried on their craft quite distinctly from that of the 'Painters,' each regulated by their own Guild. Close as was the

affinity of the two crafts, they seem to have existed on very friendly terms, each recognizing the other as having different methods and vocation, although their work differed mainly in the vehicle with which their colours were made fluid, the 'Painters' using oil and varnish, and the 'Stainers' water and size. It is this latter which is referred to by Falstaff, in the context of the above quotation, as 'water-work.'

The medium of oil and varnish was jealously held by the 'Painters' as their special privilege, and one that they were able to establish against the 'Plasterers,' who were restricted to the use of six colours, 'mingled with size only, and not with oil,' and they were forbidden the use of varnish, 'either mixed with the paint or as a glazing.'

The outlook of the stainer was precisely similar to that of the designer of tapestry, his work being an independent article of art, and not an ornamented portion of something else, and it could be executed under his own roof. The stainer may be regarded as the forerunner of the easel-picture painter.

Although both the painters and stainers were mainly artists, the stainers were probably, on the average, of greater ability. The painters were a body of very diverse elements, varying from the Court Sergeant Painter to house decorators of all grades.

The general esteem in which the painted-cloth was held, indicates that it was a higher degree of work than that of the ordinary wall-painting, but owing to its perishable nature too few specimens have survived to show its character. However, from contemporary descriptions¹ we are left in little doubt that they consisted usually of a figure subject framed in a rich ornamental border, such as we are familiar with in tapestry. As tapestries were obtained from countries more advanced in art, it seems probable that they may have influenced the stainers to a considerable extent, and have served them as models.

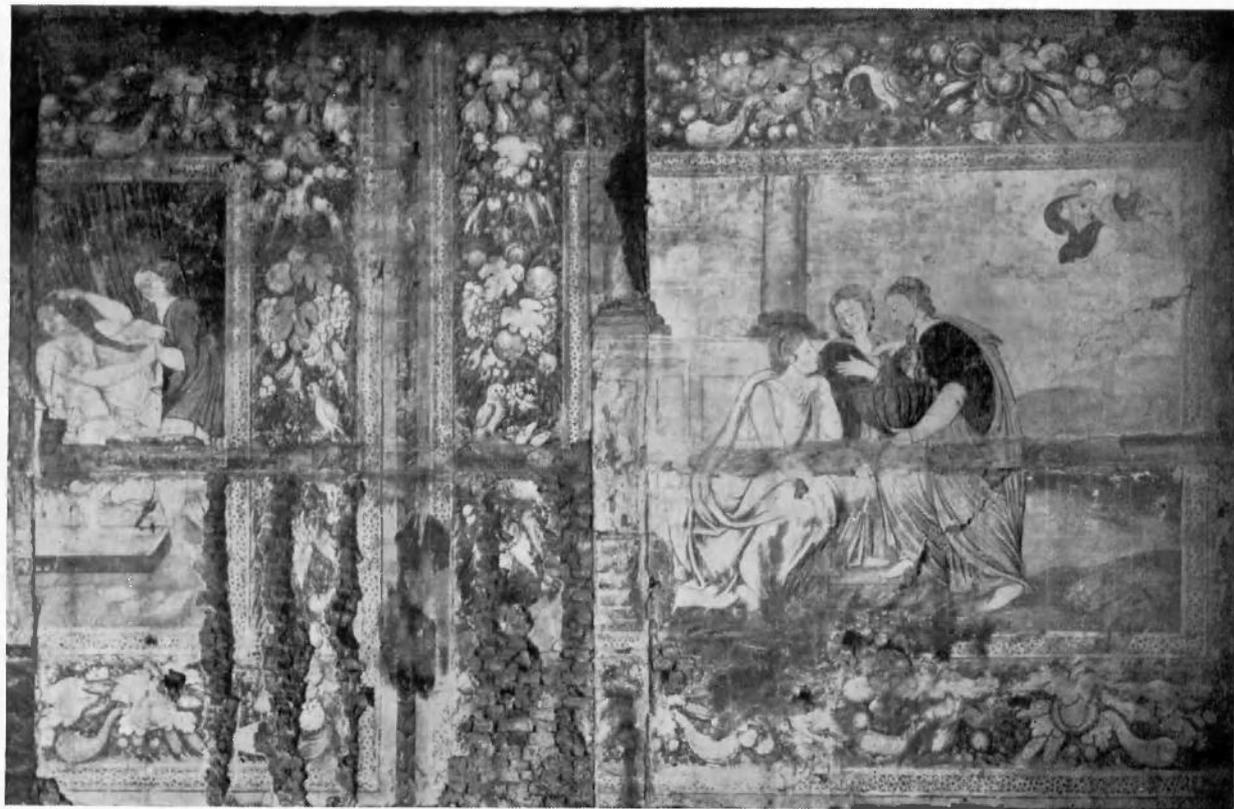
In London, as early as 1502, the two crafts amalgamated, and formed a powerful company known henceforth as the Painter-Stainers. It is interesting

¹ Several of these have been quoted in *Arch. Journ.*, xcii and xciii.

to note that they joined on terms of absolute equality, it being stipulated that in their processions a painter was to walk with a stainer.

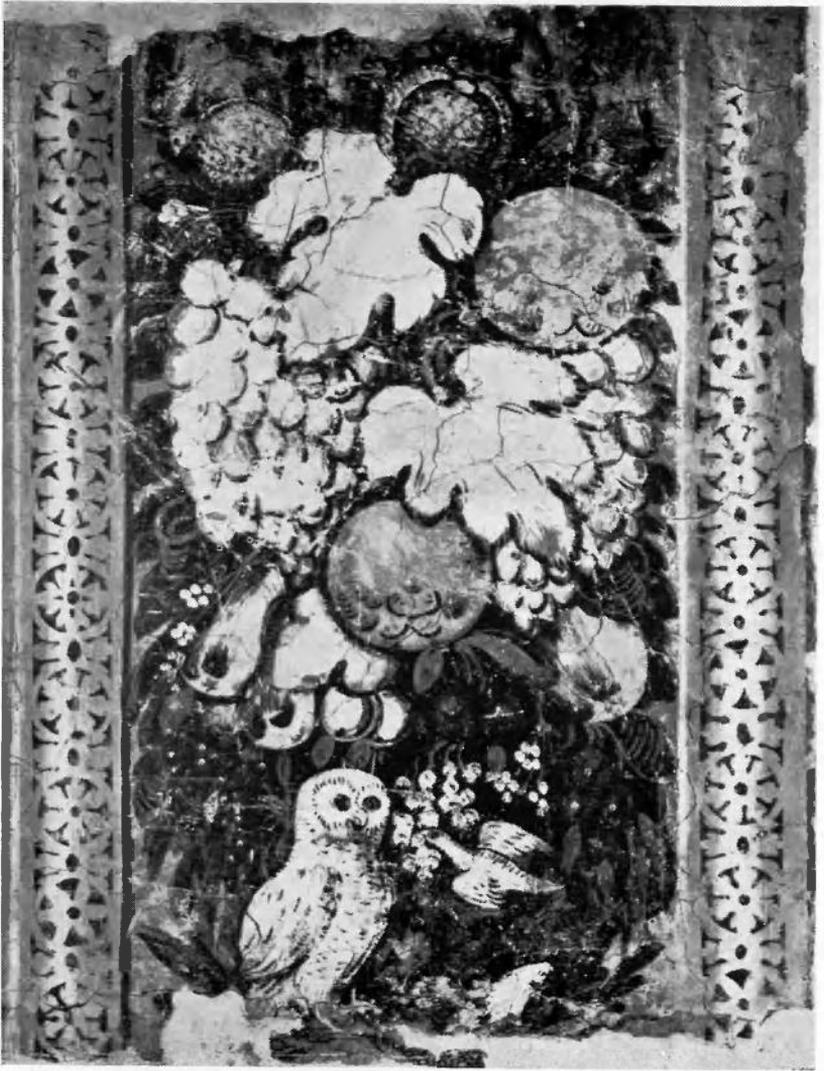
As instances are recorded of freemen of the one craft being changed to the other, it might be concluded that the effect of the fusion would have been the mutual adoption of each other's methods. In design, at least, this does not seem to be borne out by the examples of wall-painting hitherto discovered, but a remarkable instance has recently come to light which is distinctly in the style of tapestry, or the painted-cloth. This consists of a series of rectangular panels, each containing an incident from the story of Cupid and Psyche, after designs by Raphael, which were engraved by the 'Master of the Die.' Each subject is framed with a bold, rich border of fruit, foliage, flowers and birds (pls. i, ii).

It was found recently at Hill Hall, Epping, one of the foremost houses in Essex, and was built by Sir Thomas Smyth, secretary of State under Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth. Sir Thomas Smyth died in 1577, before the house was finished, but he left instructions, in his will, for its completion, which were carried out by his nephew and heir, in whose time it is most probable that interior decoration would have been undertaken. Hill Hall was largely rebuilt in the early eighteenth century, when much of the earlier work was obscured. Further alterations were made in 1937, by the present owner, Lord Edward Hay, during which an old wall with painted surface was disclosed. Fortunately Lord Hay brought the discovery to the notice of the Victoria and Albert Museum authorities: The removal of a large portion of the painting has successfully resulted, and this is now on exhibition. Its removal must have been a matter of considerable difficulty as, the wall being of brick, much skill and care was necessary. The preservation of this outstanding example forms a valuable addition to the collection, as its excellent qualities help to show that wall-painting in the sixteenth century attained a higher level than would appear from the majority of the examples that have survived, most of which come from the lesser houses of provincial districts. The compositions of Raphael have been reproduced with much ability, and knowledge of the



HILL HALL, EPPING

By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum

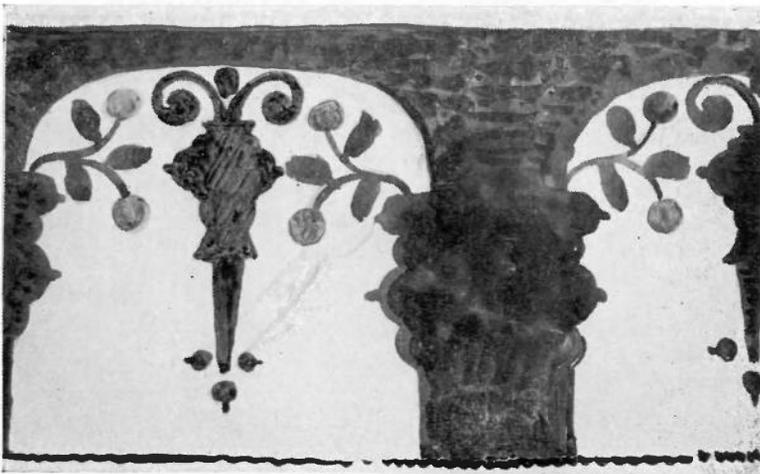


PORTION OF BORDER OF WALL-PAINTING AT HILL HALL, EPPING

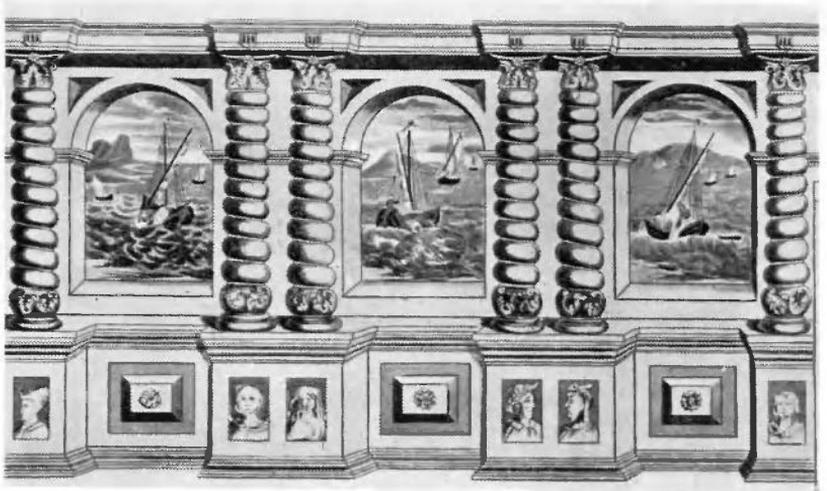
By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum



A. 108 HIGH STREET, COLCHESTER



B. SIX BELLS INN, BOCKING, ESSEX



A. EASTBURY HOUSE, BARKING. ROOM OVER HALL



B. EASTBURY HOUSE, BARKING. ROOM, EAST WING

drawing of the human figure. The border appears to be the work of another hand, and is as boldly conceived and executed, as the central subject is delicate and graceful. Edging the border on both sides is a narrow fillet with a geometrical pattern. This, it is interesting to note, has been produced by means of the stencil, and forms an excellent example of the judicious use of this tool, its severe, mechanical effect acting as a foil to the wealth of freehand ornament, and combining to make a very effective frame. This also forms the first instance of the use of the stencil that can definitely be assigned to the sixteenth century. The two other instances of its use in wall-paintings of this period, already described,¹ being more probably of the early seventeenth century.

The character of the design, and its handling, suggest that this Hill Hall painting is the work of a stainer, who had turned painter, as so many stainers must have been constrained to do towards the end of the sixteenth century, when the painted cloth appears to have ceased as a craft. As late as 1581 painted cloths were still being made as they are mentioned in the Articles of the Company but 'in later records reference to this branch of the Company's art die out,'² while Stow, 1598, tells us, "now the workmanship of staining is departed out of use in England."³

The discontinuance of the painted cloth may not have been entirely due to a caprice of fashion; there is also a good practical reason why this should have come about. For the greater part of the century the general method of forming the walls of houses, except in stone districts, was by filling the spaces, between the timber bones of the building, with 'wattle and daub'. Not only were these panels of clay-mud and interwoven twigs of willow and hazel ill-fitting, but the mud was very liable to shrink and crack, and disintegrate by action of the weather, while the wattles also frequently rotted and caused gaps, needing constant repair. Such defective walls must have been

¹ *Arch. Journ.*, xcv, 112.

² W. A. D. Englefield, *History of the Painter-Stainers Company of London* (1923), p. 69.

³ *Survey of London*, under Painter-Stainer's Hall.

a great source of draughts to which Shakespeare alludes :

‘ Imperious Caesar, dead and turn’d to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away :
O! that that earth, which kept the world in awe,
Should patch a wall to expel the winter’s flaw.’¹

There is little doubt that textile hangings did much to mitigate this nuisance, for which purpose the painted cloth with its impervious surface of paint and size, must have been very serviceable.

Towards the end of the century, ‘ wattle and daub ’ was superseded, on exterior walls at least, by the more effectual means of ‘ lath and plaster,’ and by ‘ brick nogging.’ In this way hangings were deprived of much of their purpose, and painting directly on the wall became more extensive, and retained popularity during the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

Except to the stainers themselves, the passing of the painted cloth may not have been very apparent, as many of those already made would have continued in use until their liability to damage had rendered them unpresentable. The stainers, however, must have been placed in the necessity of finding fresh spheres for their abilities, and many of them possibly took to painting easel pictures which were then just coming into vogue, while others may have become wall-painters, adopting not only a new medium, but also working in the manner of the painters. Considering the large number of men that had been engaged in the craft of staining, it is remarkable that the Hill Hall painting is the only example in the manner of tapestry, or the painted cloth that has so far come to light.

ARCADED FAÇADE

Paintings in this class are mainly of two widely separated forms, both of essentially architectural character. Those in important houses are a representation of a fully developed classic façade with columns, arches, frieze and panelled plinth, richly ornamented, with the space under the arches filled with figures, seascapes, etc., in rich colouring.

¹ *Hamlet*, Act v, Scene 1.

The simple form, which occurs in the smaller houses, is an adaptation of the 'stud' as a column, adding a capital and throwing an arch over the intervening space between the 'studs.' This representation of a façade is painted in solid black, or some dark colour, on the white or cream ground of the plaster, and has no further enrichment beyond some pendant ornament, suspended under the arch, the capital and mouldings on the shaft being indicated in profile at the sides.

The first of this simpler form to be recorded was found in an upper room of 61 High Street, Amersham, Bucks, in 1931 (fig. 1), above the room on the ground floor where the 'Nine Worthies' were discovered, and has already been described in the *Archaeological Journal*.¹

Several similar discoveries have since come to light. Mr. H. C. Andrews in 1937 reported an almost identical painting found at 53 High Street, Hoddesden, Herts.,² of which he was fortunately able to secure a photograph before it was destroyed. The main difference of this design from that at Amersham is the weakness of the arch and the somewhat heavy bracket forms in the lower corners, at the base of the columns, which are probably intended to represent bases (fig. 2).

A portion of another example of this scheme, which was found at 108 High Street, Colchester, is in the Museum at Colchester (pl. iii A). Although only the upper part containing the arch is preserved, it is sufficient to show that it belongs to this series. The space between the uprights is very narrow, being only 10½ inches in width; the arch is supported on two consoles instead of capitals; it has a large pendant ornament, and is painted in a dark green colour, with some attempt to show detail on the console and the pendant, but otherwise it conforms to type, as represented by that of Amersham.

A further Essex example has been found at the Six Bells Inn, Bocking, when it was destroyed for road-widening in 1933. Although showing some variation it is in general respects of a similar scheme. The arch is of the three centred Tudor form, and

¹ *Arch. Journ.*, lxxxix, 146.

² *Trans. E. Herts. Arch. Soc.*, x, 88.

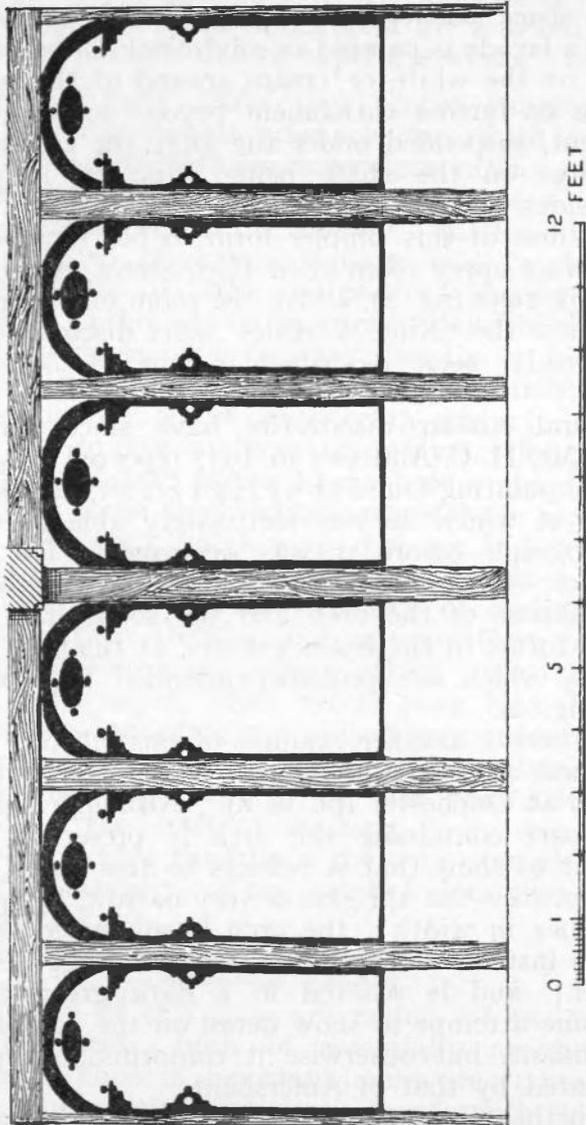


FIG. I. 61 HIGH STREET, AMERSHAM

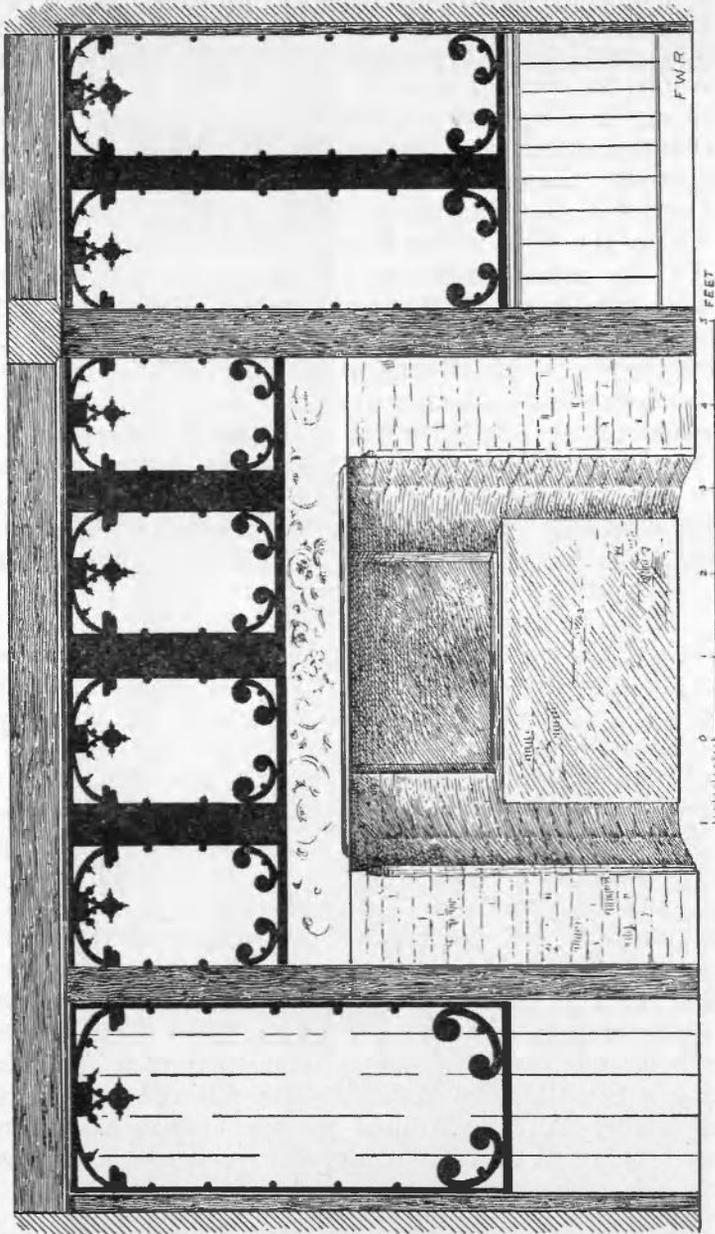


FIG. 2. 53 HIGH STREET, HODDESDEN

together with the capitals suggests that it represents a brick, or stone, structure. It has a vase-shape pendant, on either side of which is a floral spray springing from the top of the capital (pl. iii B). This example has been recorded by the Rev. G. Montagu Benton,¹ to whom we are indebted for the loan of the illustration from a drawing by Mr. Alfred Hills, of Braintree. Some portions of the painted plaster are preserved in the museum at the Town Hall, Braintree, of which Mr. Hills is the Hon. Curator.

Of the more ambitious renderings of the classic façade two were at Eastbury House, Barking, and attracted notice as early as 1814,² and again in 1834,³ when they were excellently drawn and reproduced by colour engravings, which is most fortunate, as later years of neglect have left little but traces of the originals.

In the room over the Hall the panels formed by the arch were arranged as openings looking on to the sea; each contained a seascape with boats painted in natural colours. These were divided from each other by twin columns of spiral shape (pl. iv A).

In a room of the east wing, the walls were painted with a similar scheme except that the columns were straight and fluted, the arched panels represented as niches in each of which was a single figure in early seventeenth-century costume (pl. iv B).

A well-known example of this class is at Rothamsted House, Herts.,⁴ in which the rest of the façade is somewhat overweighted by a massive frieze bearing a representation of a battle scene, a subject rarely met with in domestic wall-paintings of this period. The panels of the arcade are treated as niches with scolloped heads, the space beneath containing an animal form. This painting was described and figured in 1902, but since then a further portion of the frieze has been disclosed on which is portrayed a fortress which is the object of attack by the mounted warriors and artillery in the former portion. This has been described by Mr. C. H. Andrews,⁵ by whose kindness the whole painting is here reproduced (pl. v).

¹ *Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.*, xxiii, 8.

² Elizabeth Ogborne, *History of Essex*.

³ T. H. Clarke and W. H. Black, *Eastbury Illustrated*.

⁴ *St. Albans and Herts. Arch. Soc. Trans.*, vol. i, part iv, n.s. 376 and *Proc. Soc. Ant.* (second series), xix, 51.

⁵ *Trans. E. Herts. Arch. Soc.*, xi, part 2.



ROTHAMSTED HOUSE, HERTS.



STRATFORD ST. MARY, SUFFOLK

By courtesy of the Society of Antiquaries

There is one instance of an intermediate version of this scheme found in a small house at Siwards End, Saffron Walden. The arcade is a fanciful simulation

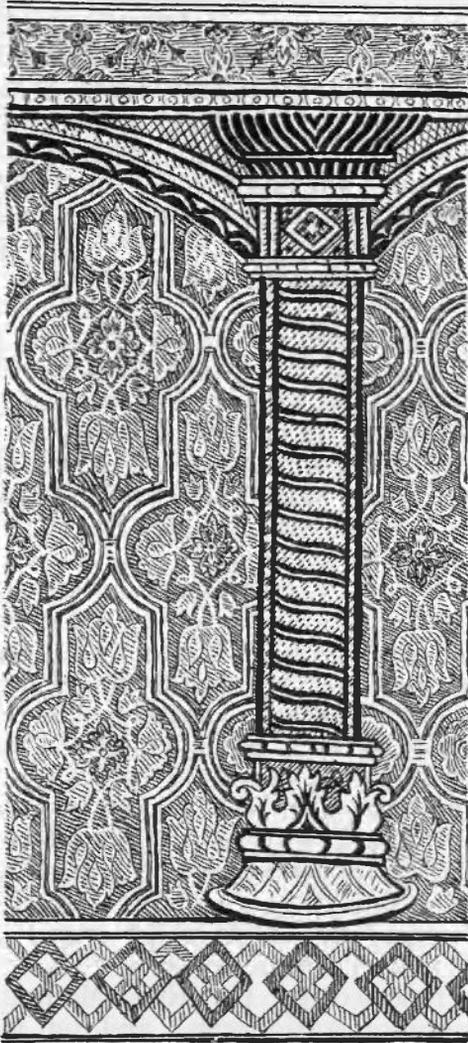


FIG. 3. SIWARD'S END, SAFFRON WALDEN

of the classic style characteristic of the Elizabethan period (fig. 3). The columns are of pilaster form with a spiral ornamentation and have elaborate capitals and

foliated bases. The distance between the columns is about 9 feet, over which a shallow arch is thrown, the space below being filled with a Mooresque pattern, evidently intended to represent a textile hanging. The whole is in rich, harmonious colour, as is well shown by the excellent reproduction of Mr. Maynard's drawing accompanying its account in the paper already referred to above.¹ Such a striking decoration as this would hardly have been overlooked, or ignored, as the simplest form of this class may easily have been, so, as this is the only one so far noted, it seems probable that this intermediate form was not often adopted.

GEOMETRICAL

As most ornament is formed, more or less, on a geometrical basis, it may seem superfluous to distinguished any under this heading as a class. There are, however, many designs in Elizabethan ornament which consist of little else but circles, spirals, quatrefoils and such forms, sometimes of strap-work, and also in single line. Sometimes this may be restricted to one part of a decorative scheme, such as a frieze, or dado, but in other cases the entire scheme is a composition of geometrical forms and interlacements of strap-work.

This kind of ornament seems to be saracenic in origin and was adopted in Italy at an early stage of the renaissance, but it appears to have reached this country together with the later developments. It caught a firm hold on the imagination of the sixteenth century craftsmen who revelled in the intricacies of strap-work in ornamental work of all descriptions, so that it has come to be regarded as the most characteristic feature of this period.

Of this order one of the most successful is that found at Brook Farm, Stratford St. Mary, Suffolk, which was reported by the Rev. Montagu Benton to the Society of Antiquaries,² and by whose kind permission the illustration is here reproduced (pl. vi). This very intricate design of strap-work bears signs of its eastern origin. It was painted in shades of Venetian red, with lines of white and black to give the

¹ *Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.*, xii, 32.

² *Antiq. Journ.*, xvi, pl. xxxvii,
214.

appearance of relief. With slight variations this pattern occurs in other wall-paintings, such as the painted stud at Great Pednor, Bucks., where the central motif forms the cap of a pilaster,¹ and it is used to form a frieze at Rothamstead House, Herts. (pl. vii).

The more characteristic Elizabethan treatment of strap-work is shown by the painting at the Priory, Thaxted, Essex² (pl. viii), which is made up of circles interwoven with diagonal bands and overlaid with vertical and horizontal bands united with Tudor roses, at the point of crossing at the centre of the circles. It has a zig-zag frieze with half a flower in the consequent triangles, and is bounded top and bottom with a band of cable pattern, this being a frequent form of frieze decorations, which also occurs on pilasters. An example in which both frieze and filling consist of concentric and interlaced circles of strap-work is that from Bramley Old Hall (pl. ix A), a drawing of which, by Prof. E. Tristram, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Such decoration may seem somewhat distracting according to our ideas, but apparently it was found stimulating in the sixteenth century.

A less aggressive example of interlacing circles occurred at 28 High Street, Stony Stratford, Bucks. (fig. 4), which was found in a first-floor room. All the lower part of the walls had been renewed about the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Tudor fireplace was torn out and replaced by a modern cast-iron grate. Only two or three feet at the top of the wall remained with portions of the painting.

There was a narrow frieze 9 inches deep, which contained the upper and lower halves of a row of interlaced circles and was separated by a band of strap-work with eyelets, under which, in places at least, the circle pattern was carried down the filling. At intervals this was broken by horizontal panels, about 2 ft. 6 in. wide, by 1 ft. 2 in. deep, which had formerly contained black-letter inscriptions, now no longer legible.

These panels were appended to the frieze and terminated in an echinus moulding beneath which

¹ *Arch. Journ.*, xcii, 264, pl. vii b.

² *Trans. Essex Arch. Soc.*, xxii, 337-40.

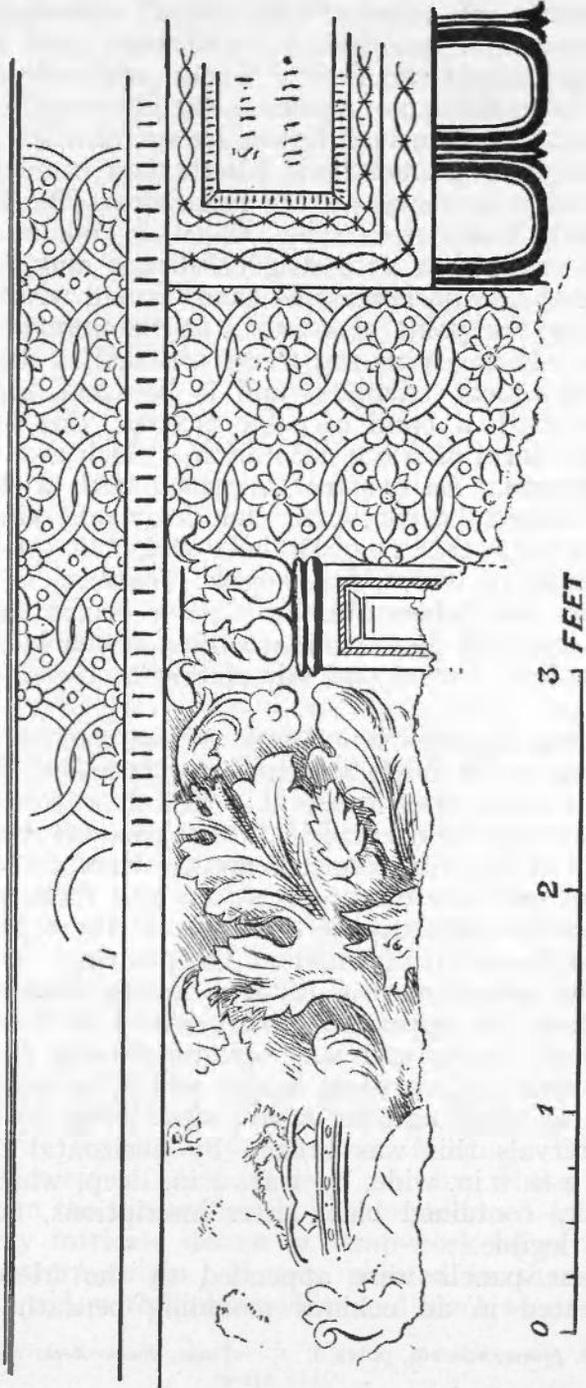
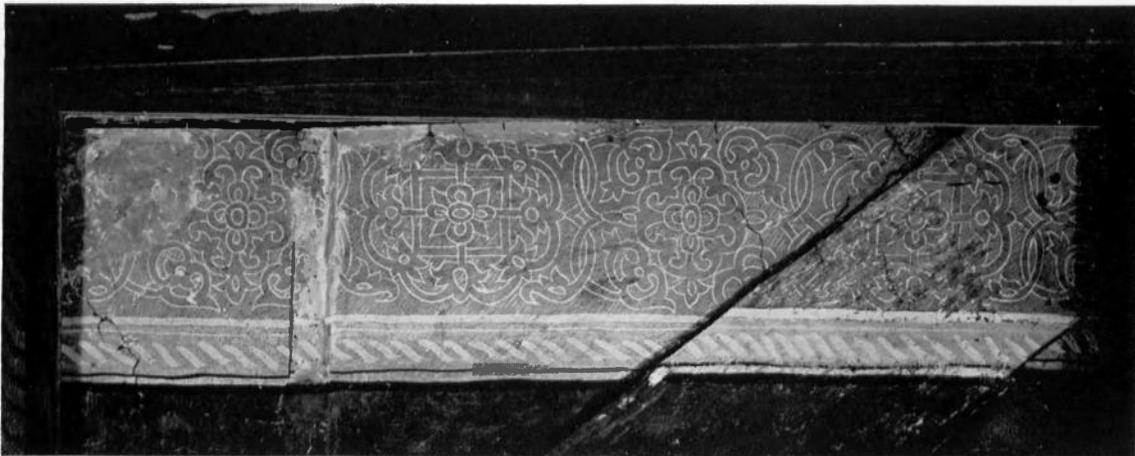


FIG. 4. HIGH STREET, STONY STRATFORD



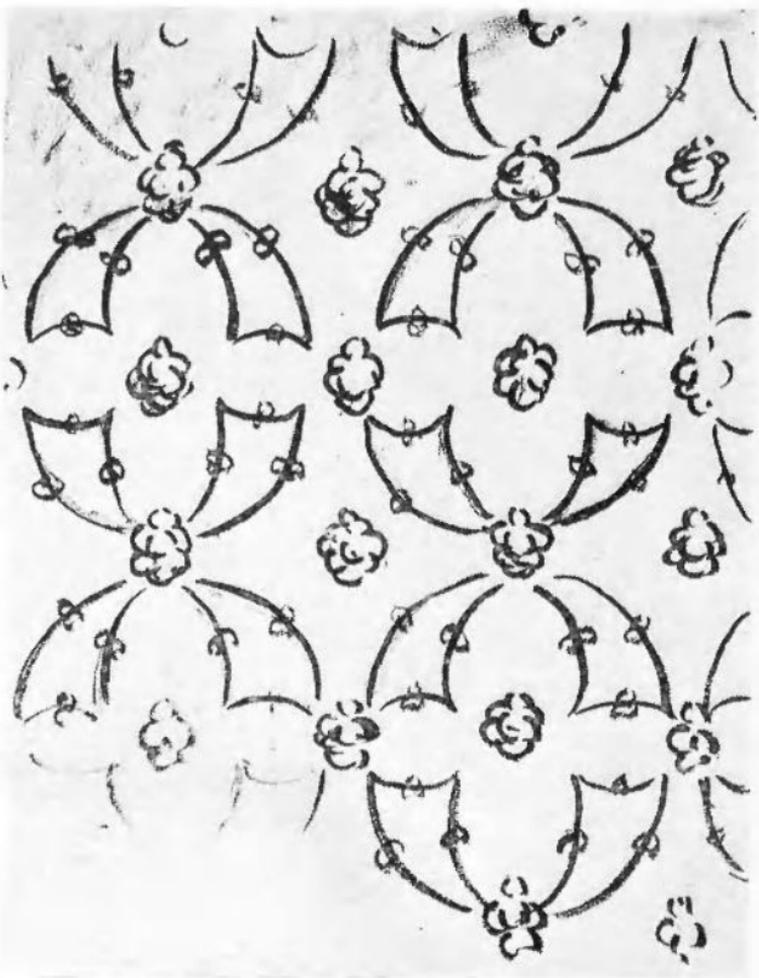
FRIEZE AT ROTHAMSTED HOUSE, HERTS.



THE PRIORY, THAXTED

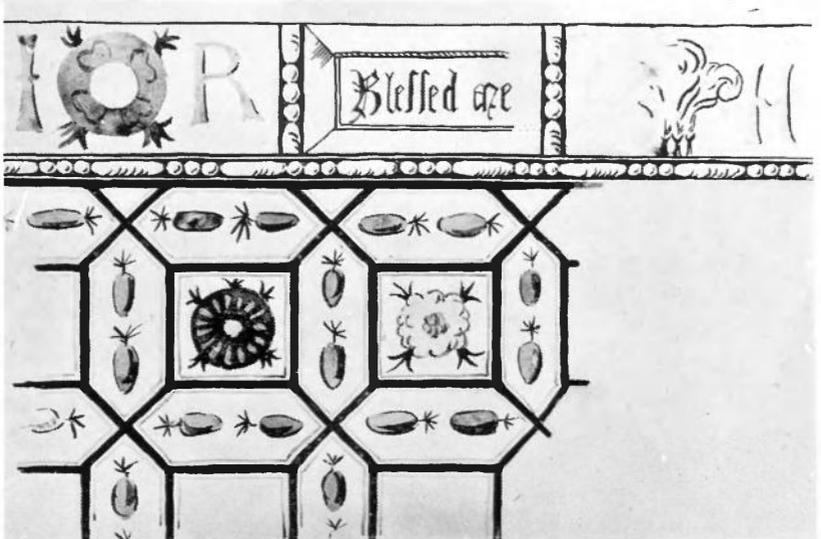
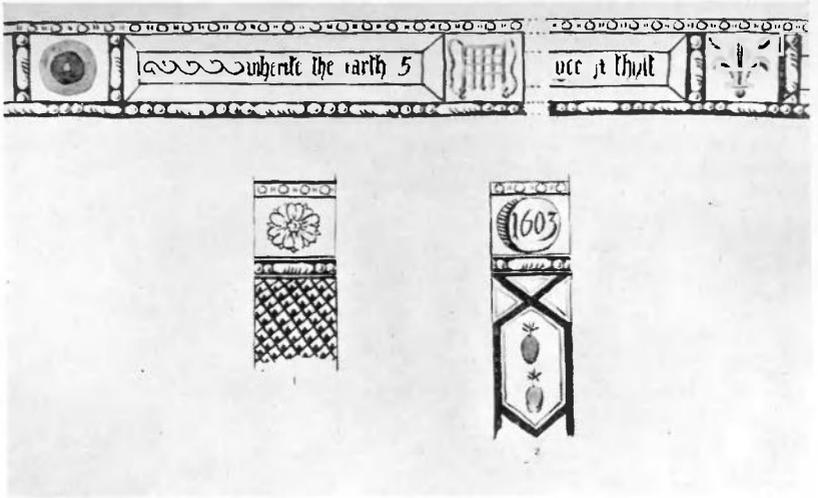


A. BRAMLEY OLD HALL, NEAR GUILDFORD



B. WHITE HORSE HOTEL, ROMSEY

By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum



PARAMOUR GRANGE, WEST MARSH, ISLE OF SHEPPEY

By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum

a blank space seems to have been left. On the other walls, the frieze was finished with the echinus moulding directly under it and in the space below no further trace of painting could be detected.

The panel over the fireplace had been flanked with pilasters with caps, and filled with the Royal Arms. Although little of this remained, fortunately the head of the supporting dragon had escaped destruction, showing the painting to be Elizabethan. This is interesting as the echinus moulding has generally been regarded as indicating a later period. The house in which this painting was found was formerly the Rose and Crown Inn, where, as *Holinshed's Chronicle* states, the young King Edward V was taken prisoner and carried to the Tower.

A simple pattern of rows of freely drawn circles, or ovals, containing a star form, arranged vertically and horizontally, from the White Horse Hotel, Romsey, is recorded by a drawing by Mr. Martin Hardie, R.I., which is in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (pl. ix B). It is specially interesting as having been drawn entirely without any mechanical aid. Although a somewhat elementary piece of work in plain black line, it forms a striking instance of the favour in which freehand was held and encouraged by the Guilds in the sixteenth century.

There are many patterns in which strap-work is used as a reticulated framing of various geometrical shapes which are filled with ornament of a distinctive style. In such cases the ornament forms the chief character of the design, the geometric setting being of secondary importance, so that the designs can be classed according to the nature of the predominant ornament. There are, however, some of these in which, by the incompetence of the craftsman during a period of successive copying, degradation, or 'unconscious variation' has so debased the original features that they can no longer be classified as in any recognized style. Whatever merit such a decoration may possess is due entirely to its geometrical basis.

A good example of this is the painting found at Paramour Grange, West Marsh, Kent, of which drawings by Mr. Martin Hardie, R.I. are in the Victoria and Albert Museum (pl. x).

It was discovered under paper laid over canvas on battens, in 1913. It has a frieze, about 9 in., which is divided by panels containing scriptural texts in black letter, having between them smaller, nearly square, panels with various Royal badges, the whole framed with a bead moulding. The filling is made up of engaged octagons which overlap so as to form a central square panel enclosed in four hexagons. The centre panels are filled alternately with a single flower and a fluted disc. In each hexagon are two curious forms unrecognizable as any known ornamental motif, which might possibly be intended for mangold-wurzels. In the frieze, at the head of one of the studs, is the date 1603, and over the fireplace is a panel with the letters I.R. on either side of a disc having marks resembling the outline of the petals of the Tudor rose. In a further panel are the Prince of Wales's feathers with the letter H on one side. The corresponding letter on the other side has disappeared, but Mr. Hardie suggests that it was P—Princeps Henricus.

The general effect of the decoration is fairly satisfactory, in spite of the primitive drawing of the detail, but such a geometric pattern is less suitable for a vertical surface than for a horizontal one. As a ceiling decoration it has frequently been used, and Sebastian Serlio, the Italian architect and artist, included several of this pattern, among others which were engraved for the use of decorators (fig. 5).

The ceiling of Cardinal Wolsey's Closet at Hampton Court is of this design (fig. 6), and as Serlio was summoned to Paris by Francis I in 1514 to prepare plans for the building of the Louvre, it is quite possible that Wolsey, during his diplomatic missions at that period, obtained the ceiling through Serlio's offices, and it may have been made from his design. It has been generally agreed that this ceiling, which is made of papier maché, was brought from elsewhere. The excellent design and modelling was hardly possible in this country at so early a date as *circa* 1520.

That the Paramour Grange painting is derived from the Hampton Court ceiling is indicated by several points of detail, widely as it has wandered from the original, but mainly from the similarity of the frieze. In the ceiling the long panels are filled with graceful

renaissance ornament of François Premier style, which being beyond the power of the wall-painter, he conveniently fills with texts. In a similar way the cornucopie and acanthus nests of the hexagon become the homely vegetables.

The central squares of the ceiling contain alternately Tudor roses, and Prince of Wales's feathers mounted on fluted discs with a background of ornament which survives only in the wall-painting as the scrubby little leaves round the flowers and discs.

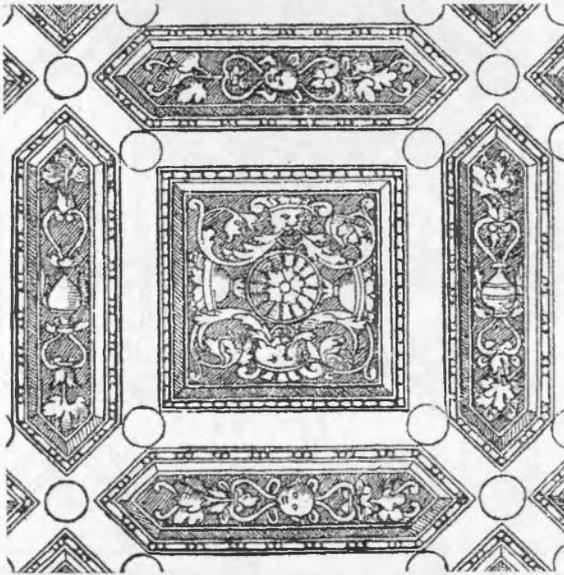


FIG. 5. FROM ENGRAVED PATTERN BY SEBASTIAN SERLIO

A remarkable example of degenerate ornament in which, owing to its geometric construction, the painter has been restrained from wandering as far afield as he must otherwise have done, is afforded by a painting found at Linton, which is recorded by W. W. Palmer.¹

The pattern is constructed on vertical and horizontal rows of ovoids so as to form star-shapes enclosing scalloped-sided panels (pl. xi). Although in details of ornament the craftsman appears to have had neither knowledge of form, nor even elementary ability to draw refined motifs, he has so placed his

¹ *Proc. Camb. Antiq. Soc.*, xxx (1929), 60.

meaningless dabs of paint within the limits of the setting that, at a cursory glance, the decoration is by no means unpleasing. Here and there amid this chaotic assemblage of dabs and streaks, it is possible to detect the pattern which an attempt has been made to imitate. Within the star-forms it is fairly evident

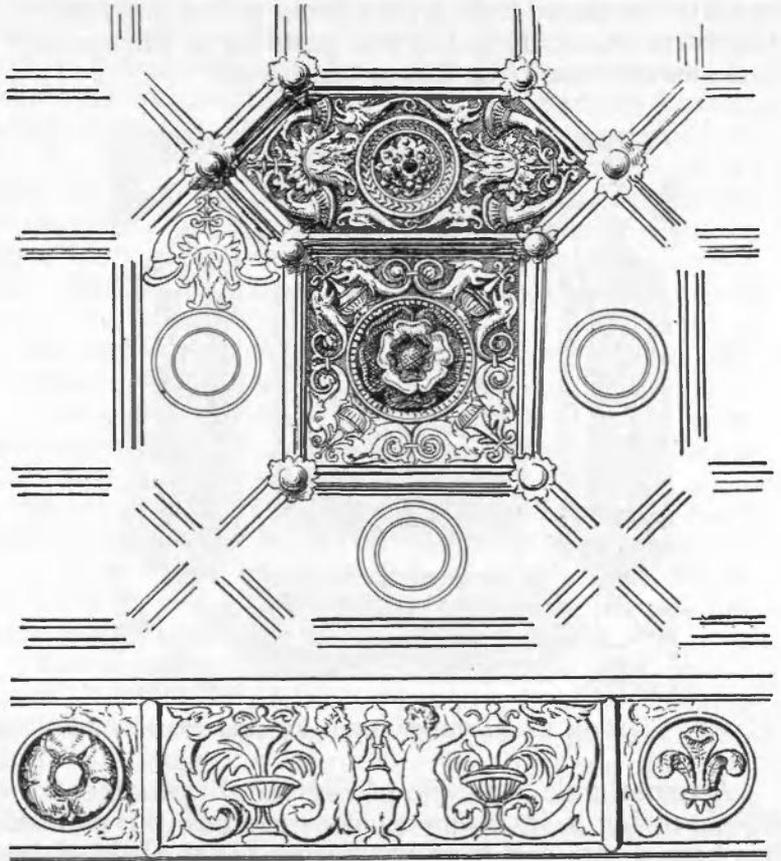
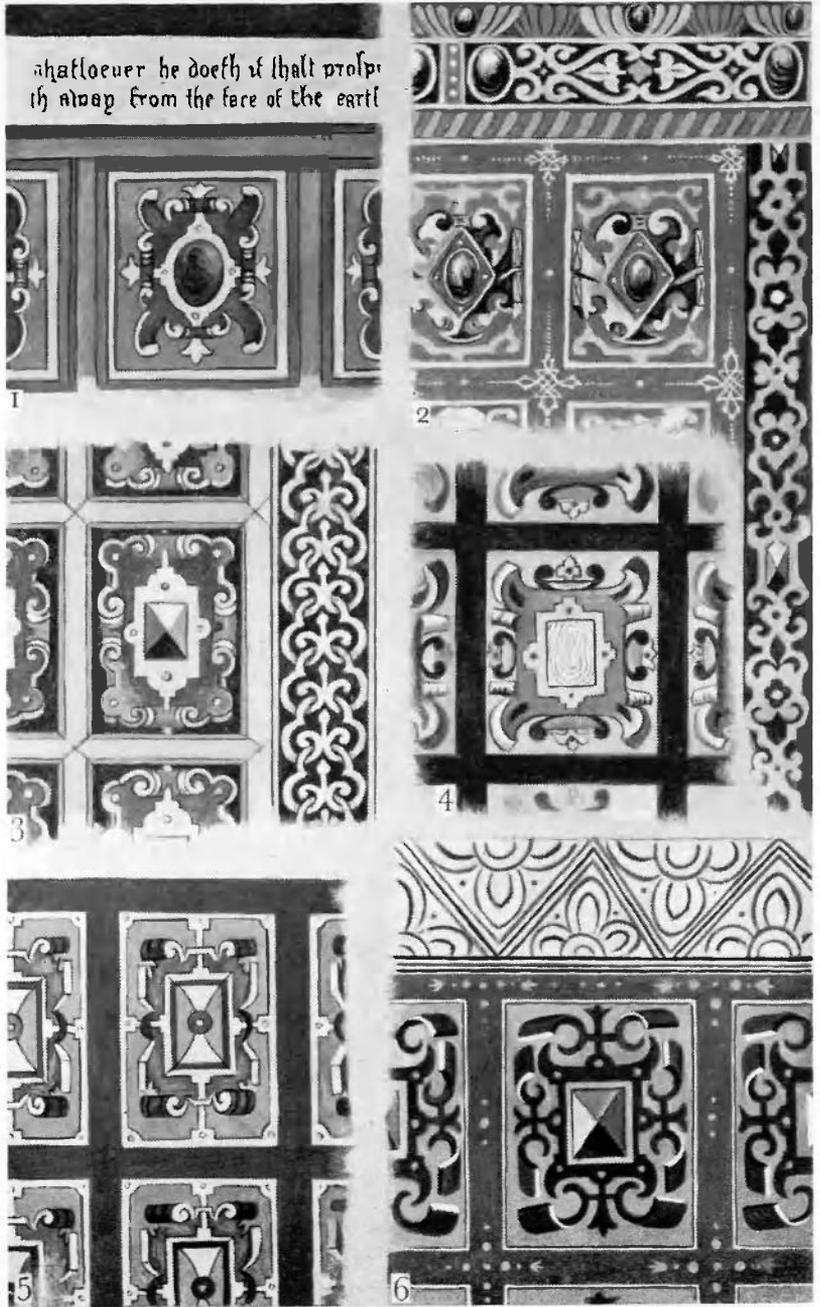


FIG. 6. CEILING OF WOLSEY'S CLOSET, HAMPTON COURT

from several of them that an acanthus nest was the intention. The filling between the stars is less obvious, many of them having the appearance of Chinese lettering amid indiscriminate dabs, but one at the top on the right gives the clue that these are meant for pineapples, a favourite motif in the sixteenth century.



HIGH STREET, LINTON, CAMBRIDGESHIRE



1. Andermans, Heston, Middlesex.
2. Bosworth House, Wendover, Bucks.
3. Eastbridge Hospital, Canterbury.
4. The Crown Hotel, Amersham, Bucks.
5. East Hanningfield, Essex.
6. High Street, Chalfont St. Peter, Bucks.

A composite diagram (fig. 7) illustrates details from various sources and may explain the kind of design from which this Linton painting has emanated. So far has the original character become obscured that it is little wonder that opinions, among those

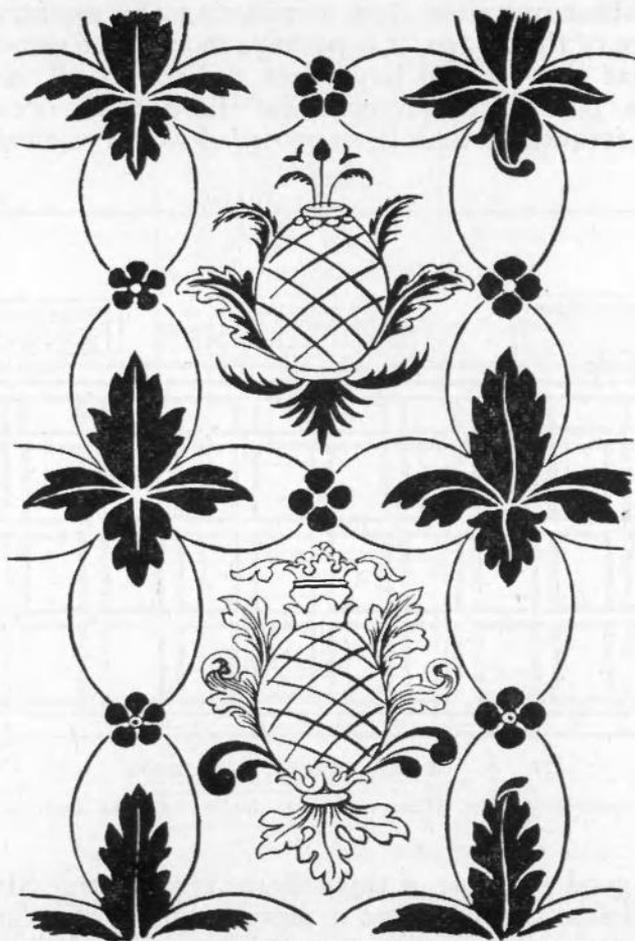


FIG. 7. COMPOSITE DIAGRAM OF SIXTEENTH CENTURY MOTIFS

who first saw it, differed greatly, its date being variously assigned to the first half of the seventeenth and even the eighteenth century. There is little doubt that it belongs to the sixteenth or at latest the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

A CLASSIFICATION OF IMITATION PANELLING

Imitation panelling occurs in great variety, from the simple representation in black lines, to the richly painted panels containing cartouche shields, and the niche, or alcove panels.

Of the simple renderings in line, few examples have been recorded, but considering the unobtrusive nature of the design, it is perhaps more to be wondered at that they should have been noticed at all, and it seems probable therefore that they have occurred more frequently than those recorded would suggest.

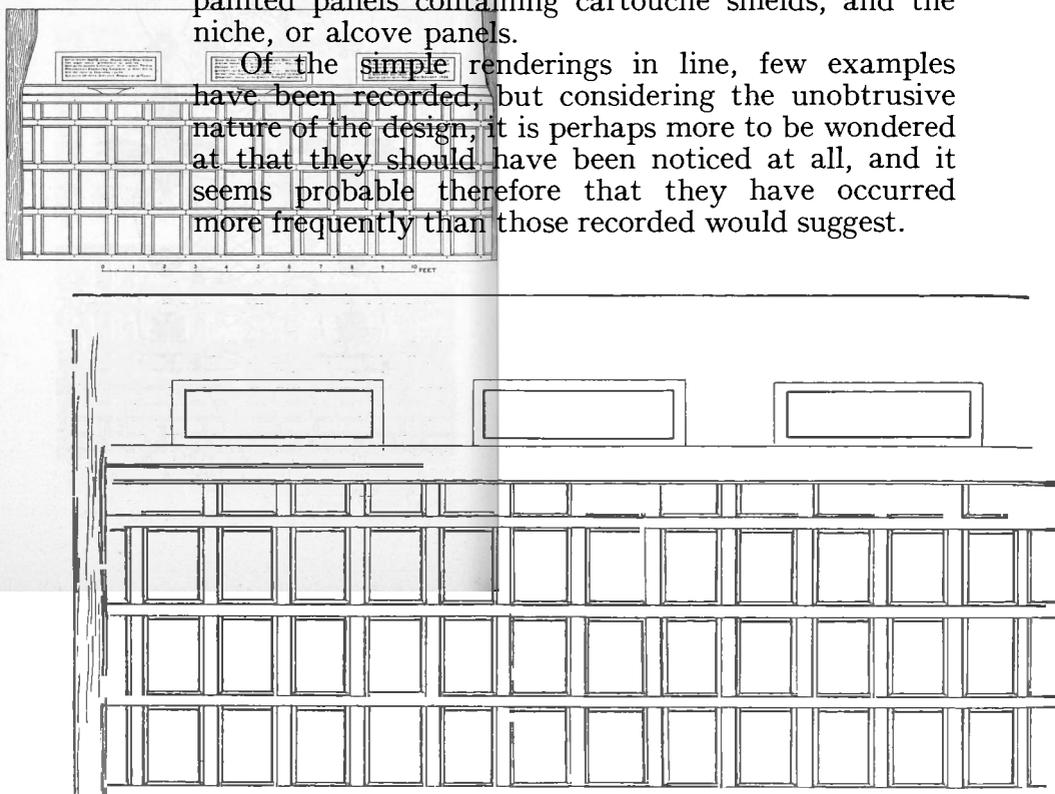


FIG. 8. GEORGE STREET, ST. ALBANS

(By courtesy of the St. Albans and Herts. Architectural and Arch. Soc.)

A good example of this scheme is at George Street, St. Albans (fig. 8), where a representation of ordinary style and rail panelling covered one side of a room. The frame work and even the little wooden pins, which fastened it, are drawn in black line, the only colour used being a light wash of brown over the surface of the sunk panel. There is no definite frieze, but the top is finished with a row of half-panels, surmounted with a double rail. The upper $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet of the wall was left plain except for three tablets about $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide,

by 1 foot deep, resting on the top rail, each being supported by a saucer-like bracket. The tablets had contained inscriptions in black letter, which appeared to have been washed in an attempt to make them more readable, but this had rendered them illegible. The whole had been whitewashed, but with the exception of the inscriptions, it had generally been

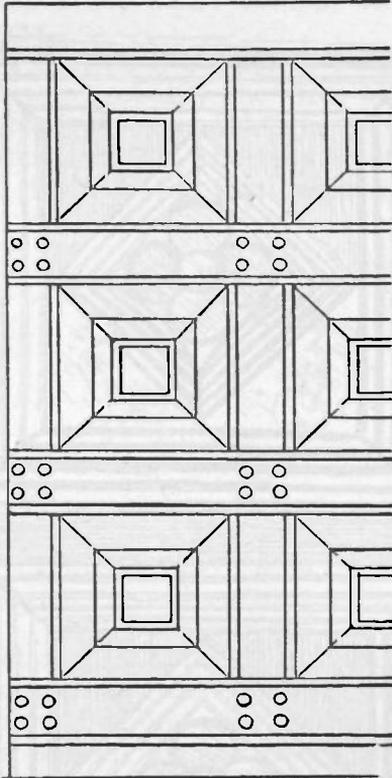


FIG. 9. HARVARD HOUSE, STRATFORD-ON-AVON

very well recovered and was all very clear and in good condition when my drawing was made in 1934. Three years later, when it was seen by Mr. E. Clive Rouse,¹ it had deteriorated, owing to damp, etc., to the extent of being 'very fragmentary,' and he was led to suppose that my drawing was a 'reconstruction' instead of being an actual copy.

A portion of a painting of a similar description only representing the square, chamfered panelling is

¹ *St. Albans and Herts. Trans.*, 1937, 105-7.

preserved at Harvard House, Stratford-on-Avon (fig. 9). This is drawn in dark red lines, with the wooden pegs boldly marked, which is interesting to note, as this simple detail becomes an elaborate ornament in the more developed examples.

Another example, rather less simple in character has been found at the house in the High Street, Rye,

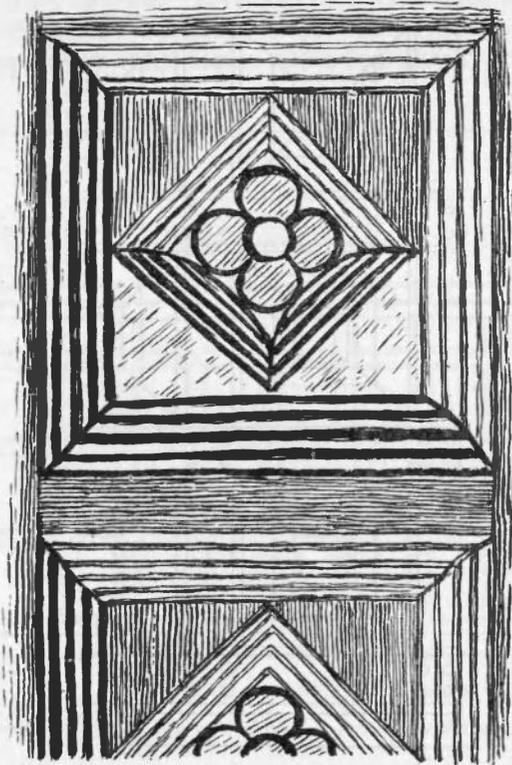


FIG. 10. BLACK BOY, HIGH STREET, RYE

(From a drawing by Mr. E. Clive Rouse)

known as 'The Black Boy.' It apparently represents inlaid panelling, and is painted in shades of reds and yellows, as if to indicate different kinds of woods (fig. 10). Fortunately the owner of the property, Lady Troubridge, has great knowledge of antiquities, and, on its discovery during reparations in 1934, she at once decided to preserve it *in situ*. It is the more

valuable as it appears to be the only example in this style. Unless perhaps the painting at Dean's Farm, Jordans, Bucks.,¹ may have had such an origin.

The far more imposing panel schemes with cartouche shields, have accumulated so rapidly during the last few years that these now form one of the largest classes, yet it is remarkable that no instance of this scheme of decoration was recorded, so far as I can find, until 1924.

The reason that such attractive paintings came to be so ignored was probably the idea, which originated in the nineteenth century, that the cartouche was an infallible indication of the seventeenth century. This was laid down in the text-books, and taught us

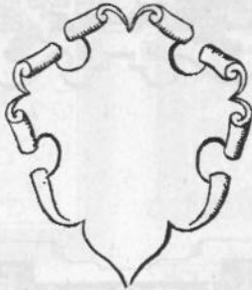


FIG. II. CARTOUCHE SHIELD SURMOUNTING QUEEN JANE SEYMOUR'S CUP. DESIGNED BY HOLBEIN.

in the art schools. So far as architectural-exterior ornament is concerned, there may be some foundation for this dictum, but in other branches of art the cartouche was well known and freely employed in this country during the sixteenth century at least from its second quarter. Even if it had not reached us from any other source, it was introduced by Holbein, as can be seen by his design of Queen Jane Seymour's Cup (fig. II), preserved in the Bodleian Library, and in other of his designs, as well as his paintings.

Later in the century there are abundant signs of its use in engravings. In Saxton's map of England, 1583, the title is framed in a cartouche of as weirdly extravagant a nature as anything that emanated from Germany, or of the Low Countries (fig. 12). while its

¹ *Arch. Journ.*, lxxxix, 171, pl. xxi.

border consists almost entirely of heraldic cartouches of a less fanciful type.

It is hardly necessary to look further than wall-paintings for examples, and in these, as in general, cartouches consist of two main forms, a framing for inscriptions and for heraldic shields. In this country, as in others of higher refinement, the cartouche was subordinated to a detail of design, as it was also in Italy, and France. It was never carried to the excess of constituting the design as it developed in Germany, and spread to the Low Countries, in the work of such

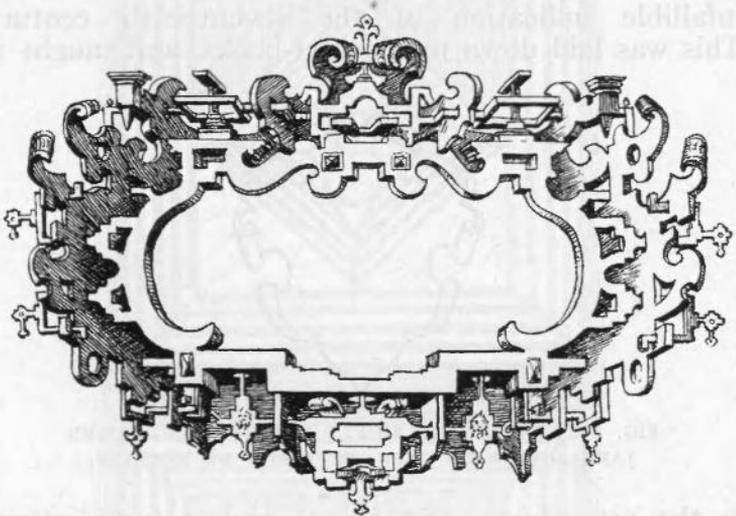
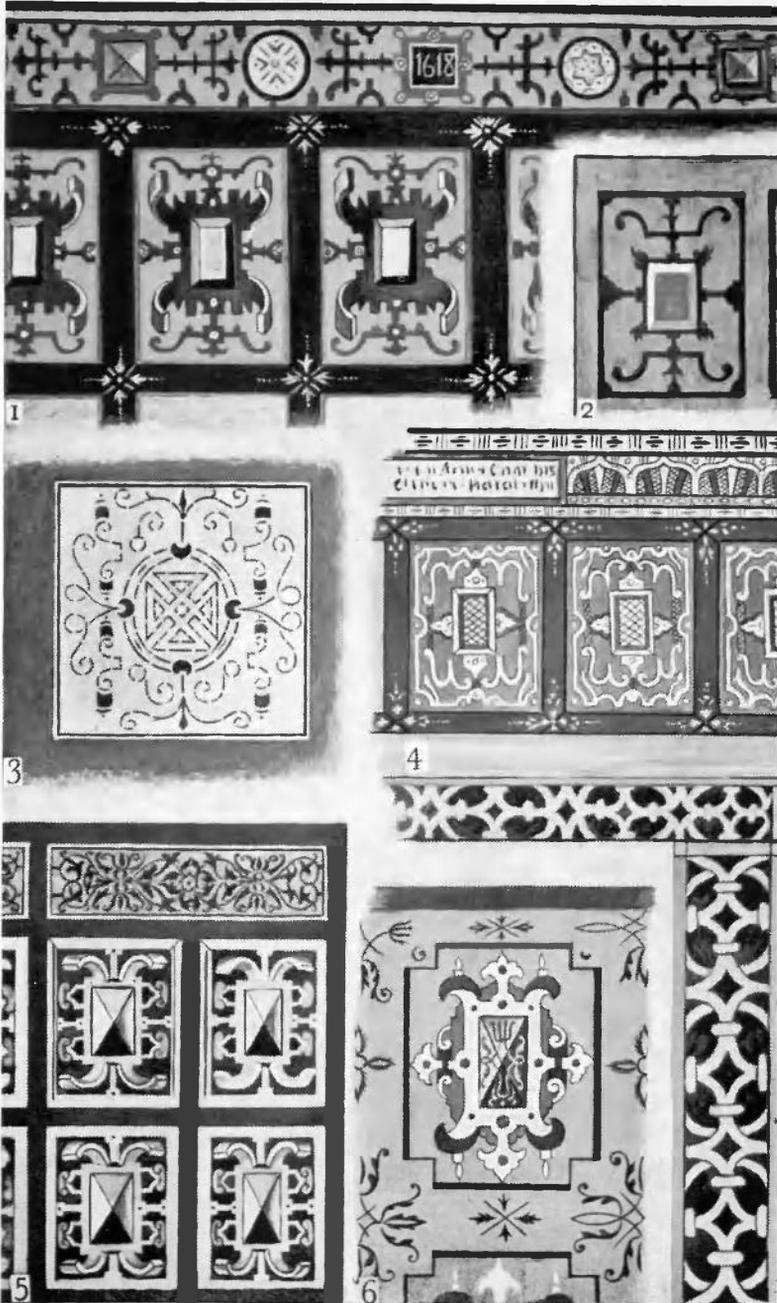


FIG. 12. CARTOUCHE FROM SAXTON'S MAP OF ENGLAND, 1583

artists as Wendel Dietterlin (1550-99), and Vredeman de Vries (1527-1604), and many others whose work became known here by means of engraved pattern sheets, and illustrated books. In spite of the strong influence of Flanders, in the latter part of the century, on our decorative art, our artists exerted considerable restraint in the treatment of the cartouche, except perhaps in engravings.

In the course of this series of papers, several instances of paintings with cartouches have been figured. In the frieze of the Flushing Inn, Rye,¹ (1537), are the classic tablets with volutes, which may

¹ *Arch. Journ.*, xcii, pl. vi.



1. Bennett's Castle Farm, Dagenham.
 2. Weaver's House, Stratford St. Mary, Suffolk.
 3. Joscelyns, Little Horkesley, Essex.

4. Rose and Crown Inn, Ashdon, Essex.
 5. Cumberland Lodge, Ipswich.
 6. East Hanningfield, Essex.



1. English Painted Door, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1913.

2. Shelley Hall (?), Essex, 1914.

3. Trevine, Boley Hill, Rochester.

4. Longley House (Old Satis House), Rochester.

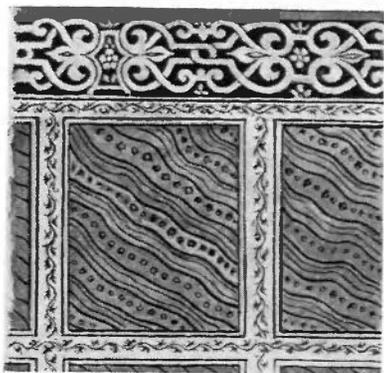
5. The Crown Inn, Hockerill, Essex.

6. 53 Gainsborough Street, Sudbury, Suffolk.



A. COOPERSALE HOUSE, EPPING

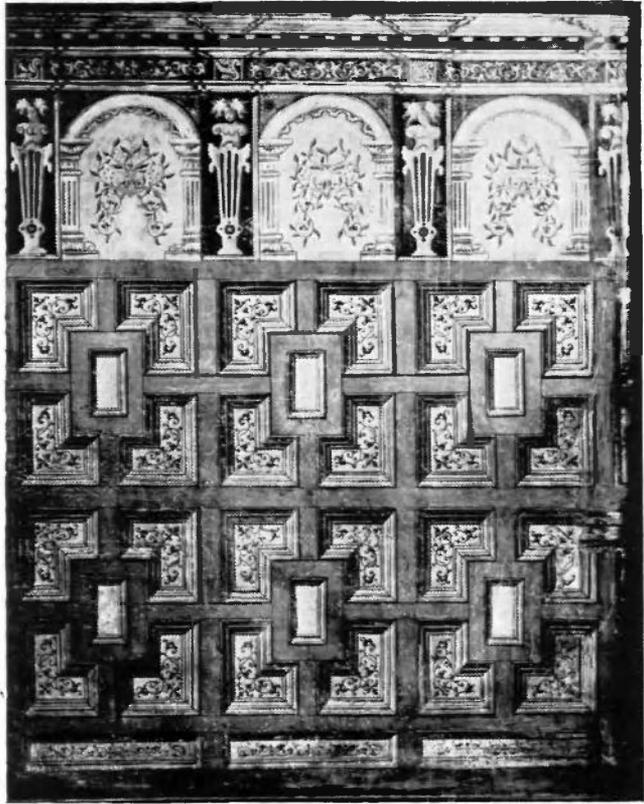
By courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum



B. 8 HIGH STREET, BISHOP'S STORTFORD



C. NORTH HILL, COLCHESTER



CUMBERLAND LODGE, IPSWICH

be regarded as the incipient stage that develops into such an elaborate cartouche as that on the chimney breast at Vernon House, Farnham (1561-80)¹ on which are also several fairly complex heraldic cartouches.

At Thame, Oxon (1550-80), although only a portion of the painting has been recorded, it is sufficient to show a cartouche of a very developed character.²

Early heraldic examples can be seen in the work of Theodore Bernardi, Bishop's Palace, Chichester,³ the date being probably the first quarter of the century (fig. 13).

A mid-century example is that of Ludlow Grammar School.⁴ At Chalfont St. Peter we have two examples of as early in the seventeenth century as 1603, one

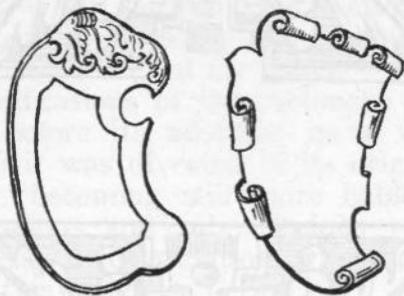


FIG. 13. TWO CARTOUCHE SHIELDS FROM BERNARDI'S PAINTINGS, BISHOP'S PALACE, CHICHESTER

in a panel scheme (fig. 6, pl. xii), which has passed into a late stage of development, the other a tablet containing a black letter inscription, which shows distinct signs of degeneration (fig. 14).

These may form perhaps sufficient evidence that the cartouche shield was thoroughly well known by the middle of the sixteenth century, in wall-painting.

We may now pass to the consideration of the panel scheme with cartouche shields, a decoration derived from the carved and painted panelling of the houses of the upper classes, whose heraldry was emblazoned on the cartouche shields. The painted simulation was necessarily a late development in sixteenth century wall-painting and was a

¹ *Arch. Journ.*, xcii, pl. xviii.

² *Ibid.*, xciii, pl. xiii.

³ *J.B.A.A.*, xx, 315.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 232, pl. vii.

mere decoration totally without meaning, and adopted by the trading classes on account of the richness of colour the scheme afforded, and also, perhaps, because it appeared to be a similar type of work to that favoured by the nobility. A series of examples of this scheme is shown on plates xii, xiii, xiv, together with the friezes and other adjuncts when recorded.

It would be futile to look for the development of the cartouche in these examples, as that had already passed through all its stages, in the original panelling from which it is derived. It would be unsafe therefore to put too much stress on the simpler forms being of earlier date, as they may have been copied from an

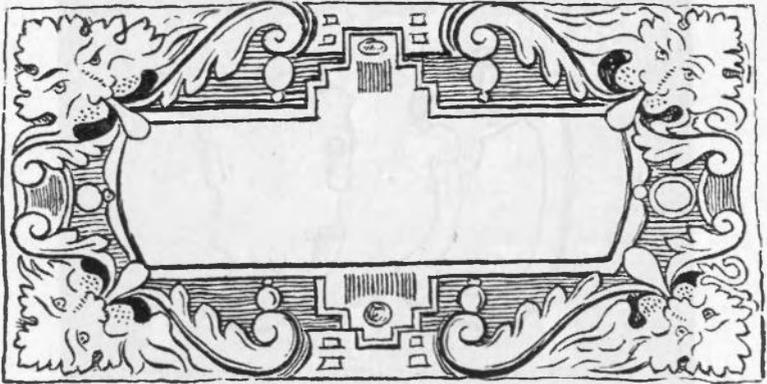


FIG. 14. WALL-PAINTING, CHALFONT ST. PETER

early form at a later time. The examples from Heston and Canterbury (figs. 1 and 3, pl. xii), however, are of a character that may entitle them to be considered earlier than the rest of the series, and are exceptional in retaining the shields free of any great sign of degeneracy.

That of Wendover (fig. 2, pl. xii) might on general grounds be attributed to the late sixteenth century. The cartouche is of simple form, but this simplicity is a reversion, owing to the coils at top and bottom having been shed to form independent ornaments—a process that can be seen operating in various ways, and stages in other examples. In that from Chalfont St. Peter (fig. 6, pl. xii) the shield, though still intact and recognizable, has become so laniated that it no

longer forms a serviceable whole, its parts being held so tenuously that their transition into detached ornaments is just a matter of accident, or convenience, as at Dagenham (fig. 1, pl. xiii), and Stratford St. Mary (fig. 2, pl. xiii), where the shield has shrunk into the four insignificant tufts at the corners of the central boss.

The central boss is the one element of the original cartouche that persists throughout all examples, however degenerate. In no case has any attempt been made to represent its original purpose, for it is mostly treated as a jewel. In the earlier forms this boss is represented as an applied feature of the shield, not only riveted, but having horizontal and vertical bands with trifoliate terminals which are laced into the scrolled edges of the shield. This is also a persistent feature, but in some cases the terminals become absorbed into the border of the panel.

Many modifications of the cartouche had already come about before its adoption as a wall-painting scheme, when it was divested of its original purpose and meaning, becoming still more liable to change both by conscious and sub-conscious variation. It is this process of degradation which is strikingly exhibited in this series.

In the hands of a skilful artist such transmutation may be turned to good account, as is shown by the excellent ornament from a painted door in the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 1, pl. xiv). Its precise locality has not been recorded but is known as English. It is a very graceful strap-work pattern and, viewed with others of the series, leaves no doubt that it is derived from the cartouche.

A similar arrangement is that of Shelly Hall (?) of which a drawing is in Saffron Walden Museum (fig. 2, pl. xiv). In the case of examples from neighbouring houses at Rochester,¹ that from 'Trevine' is still a cartouche shield (fig. 3, pl. xiv), although of unusual and rather fanciful development, the central boss having shrunk to inconsiderable dimensions. The other from Longley House (originally Satis House) has travelled a long way from the shield, but the component parts are still preserved and recognizable amid the rich

¹ *Arch. Cant.*, xli, 127-141.

filagree ornament into which it has been transformed. It has been suggested that this has been derived from a book-cover decoration, but the same evolution can be traced in the book-cover as in wall-painting decoration, a cartouche shield with the arms of the owner having been a general practice among early possessors of libraries.

An instance of how the cartouche became altered by unskilled hands, and evident lack of knowledge of what it represents, is afforded by that at the Rose and Crown, Ashdon (fig. 4, pl. xiii). The white lines which originally formed the outline have become meaningless, and in some instances turned into snakes.

The most extraordinary example is that of the Crown Inn, Hockerill (fig. 5, pl. xiv). With all its degeneracy as the work of an unskilled man it retains unmistakable indications of its origin, but the four corner coils have been transformed into dolphins, so far as the artist had the ability to represent them.

Only two of this class can be dated with certainty: Dagenham (fig. 1, pl. xiii), which is inscribed 1618, and Chalfont St. Peter (fig. 6, pl. xii), which, on heraldic evidence, may with fair certainty be placed in 1603. A few years in both directions from these dates would probably cover the whole period during which this scheme was in vogue, and it may be regarded as the last flicker of life in an expiring practice, which, although lingering into the first quarter of the seventeenth century, had its roots deeply embedded in the sixteenth.

There are also among imitation panelling schemes designs from other sources, but they occur very rarely. Two examples are here figured (pl. xv). B, from 8 High Street, Bishop's Stortford, Herts.,¹ is a curious decoration, probably an imitation of stamped leather, which was mostly imported from Spain. C, from North Hill, Colchester, appears to be an independent fancy of the artist.

The alcove or niche panels appear to be of the same period as the cartouche panels, and, as in panelling, the imitation is of rarer occurrence, and follows it also in sometimes being carried in rows down the wall,

¹ *Antiq. Journ.*, xvi, pl. lxxxvii.

at others only forming a frieze. Two of the former have already been reproduced in colour, one at Aylesbury 1603,¹ the other at Wendover,² which may be a few years earlier. In the Victoria and Albert Museum there is a door from Coopersale House, Epping, of this scheme (pl. xv A). An excellent example of the alcove as a frieze is preserved at Christ Church Museum, Ipswich (pl. xvi). The panelling represented in the filling is exceptional in style, while the excellent execution of the whole work is remarkable. It was found at Cumberland Lodge, Ipswich, a house of greater importance than those in which paintings of imitation panelling usually occur.

¹ *Arch. Journ.*, lxxxix, 162, pl. xviii, fig. 24.

² *Ibid.*, lxxxvii, 92, pls. ix and x.