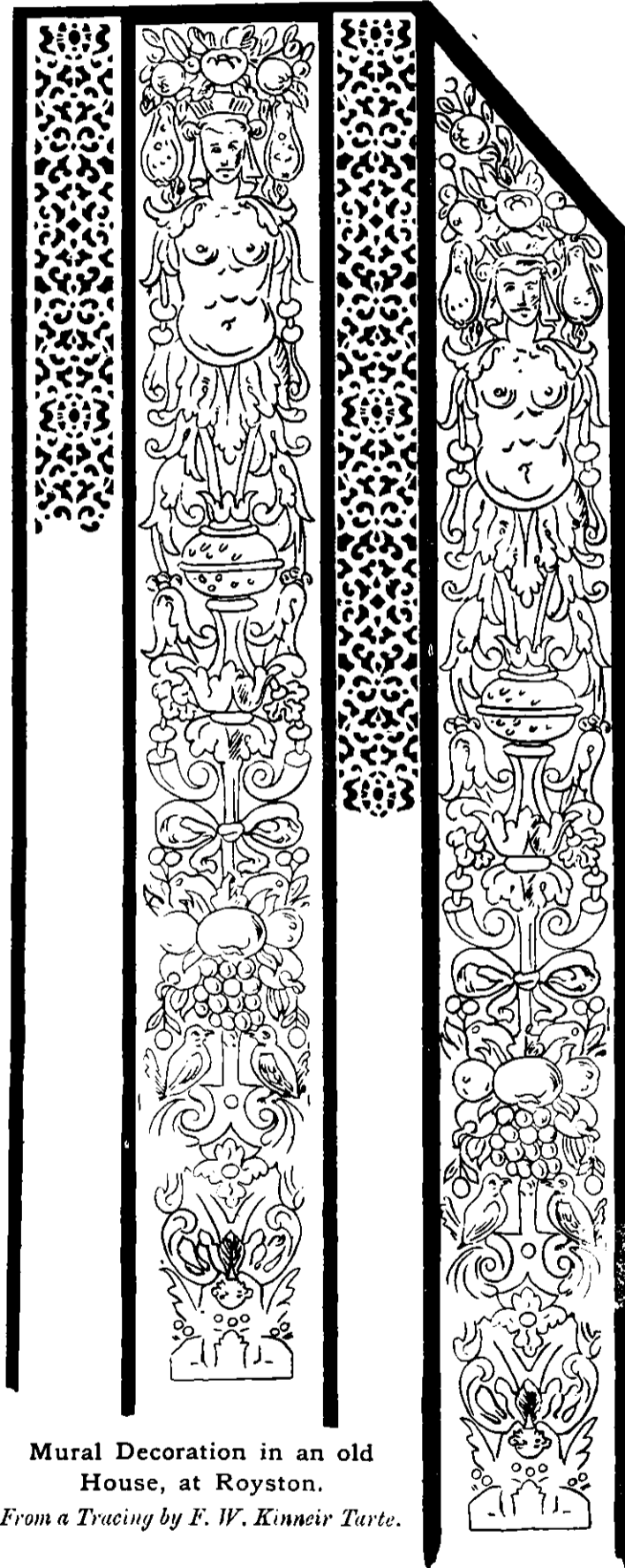


Mural Colour Decoration at Mr. H. J. Thurnall's
House, at Royston.

BY F. W. KINNEIR TARTE, M.S.A.



Mural Decoration in an old
House, at Royston.
From a Tracing by F. W. Kinneir Tarte.

Whilst visiting Mr. H. J. Thurnall's ancient house, at Royston, I was very much struck with the amount of decorative painting on the ceilings of various rooms, and in all sorts of odd places, even in the rooms in the roof; and he then told me that, sometime since, there was a portion of the upper part of the house that had always puzzled him, so much indeed, that his curiosity led him to have this opened out, with the result that he discovered it was the upper part of an ancient staircase. This had probably been closed, after an alteration had taken place, and another staircase inserted. The plaster-

work around this space is decorated in colour-work, and divided into panels executed in stencil-work and line-work. These panels vary slightly in width, and were evidently increased or decreased so that the panels should fit into the wall spaces.

The stencilled panels are from $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches to $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches in width, and 20in. repeat, and are executed in a chrome-coloured pattern, having the background coloured in Indian red, the lines on each side of these panels dividing them from the line panels, are executed in Indian red, and also vary from three-quarters of an inch to one inch in width.

The line panels have a bluish-white coloured background, the lines black, and the panels varying in width from 9 inches to 10 inches, being 6 feet long. They appear to me to have been executed by hand, the lines being in some places considerably thicker than in others, and it will be noticed that where the rake of the ceiling prevented the square-headed panels the artist was quite equal to the occasion, and deftly applied a varied design to the top of his panel. The subject is figure-work, with fruit, birds, and ribbons.

The frieze consists of two bands, the lower band 8 inches wide, being yellow, and the upper band immediately under the ceiling is 4 inches wide, and is in the red colour.

The whole of the work is in distemper colours, and is somewhat obliterated, but in many places on the various panels it was sufficiently distinct for Mr. Thurnall and myself to trace the design, and with the aid of a number of tracings, I was able to put together the complete patterns and design.
