



*DRAKELOW HALL: THE PAINTED DINING-ROOM.*

feature in English houses. At Broughton Castle, also, there is in the drawing-room an example of the internal porch, differing in form from that at the Red Lodge, but analogous in character, and associated with enriched panelling and a ceiling of moulded plaster which are very noteworthy. Boston House, Brentford, has one of the most magnificent ceilings in England, in a very unusual style, with ornamental panels and strapwork designs enframing allegorical figures. There also the mantel-piece is a remarkably fine and curious example of the time.

The mantel-piece became a particular care of the craftsman, and both design and execution often gave evidence of great imaginative power. As early as the time of Henry III., skill had been devoted to the same purpose, and there had been mantels of marble elaborately carved or painted with such designs as the Twelve Months of the Year, the Wheel of Fortune (which may be seen in far later times at Moreton Hall, Cheshire), the Root of Jesse, and other subjects. The Jacobean mantel-pieces were in many ways remarkable. That which is illustrated at Apethorpe, with Ionic pillars, and a design showing us the sword of Justice and indicating the voice of Mercy, is quite typical of the period, and is in association with an elegant strapwork ceiling and the Royal arms. Another admirable example of the armorial

mantel-piece is that at Birtsmorton Court, Worcestershire, which for several generations has been in possession of the family of Major W. P. Thackwell. Here the armorial carving is most elaborate, and executed in a particularly effective manner, and here also we have the splendid panelling and the admirable plaster-work of the time. An illustration of a mantel at Wolfeton House is equally illustrative of Elizabethan and Jacobean interiors, as, in a different form, is that at Sydenham, Devon, a house built by Sir Thomas Wise, who was knighted at the coronation of James I., and whose arms are inclosed in the interrupted pediment of the mantel design.

Even of more importance in the eyes of the craftsman than the mantel-piece was the great staircase. In this book many wonderful examples are illustrated, and perhaps none more attractive than the famous stairway at Hatfield, which is, however, but one of a considerable brotherhood of such pieces of work. There is an admirable staircase at Sydenham, which has enriched balustrades and curious lamps upon the newel-posts, where often heraldic beasts or human figures stand. Particularly quaint is that staircase at Norton Conyers, the house of Sir Richard Graham, in Yorkshire, up which tradition says Cromwell rode on horseback, in pursuit of the