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The Period of Queen Anne, by J. P. Blake and A. E. Reveirs-Hopkins**

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Title: Little Books About Old Furniture. Volume II. The Period of Queen Anne

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Release date: September 23, 2013 [EBook #43805]

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Chris Curnow, Sue Fleming and the Online
Distributed Proofreading Team at <http://www.pgdp.net>

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QUEEN ANNE WALNUT TALLBOY AND STOOL
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FURNITURE

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BLAKE

& A. E. REVEIRS-HOPKINS.
VOLUME II

THE PERIOD OF QUEEN ANNE



NEW EDITION

ILLUSTRATED

LONDON MCMXIV
WILLIAM HEINEMANN

First published *October 1911*
New Edition *January 1913*
Second Impression *June 1914*

INTRODUCTION

The sovereigns of England, unlike those of France, have seldom taken to themselves the task of acting as patrons of the fine arts. Therefore when we write of the "Queen Anne period" we do not refer to the influence of the undistinguished lady who for twelve years occupied the throne of England. The term is merely convenient for the purpose of classification, embracing, as it does, the period from William and Mary to George I. during which the furniture had a strong family likeness and shows a development very much on the same line. The change, at the last quarter of the seventeenth century, from the Jacobean models to the Dutch, was probably the most important change that has come over English furniture. It was a change which strongly influenced Chippendale and his school, and remains with us to this day.

The period from William and Mary to George I. covered nearly forty years, during which the fashionable furniture was generally made from walnut-wood. No doubt walnut was used before the time of William and Mary, notably in the making of the well-known Stuart chairs with their caned backs and seats, but it did not come into general use until the time of William. It continued in fashion until the discovery of its liability to the attacks of the worm, combined with the advent of mahogany, removed it from public favour. Walnut nevertheless remains a beautiful and interesting wood, and in the old examples the colour effects are probably unsurpassed in English furniture. Its liability to "worming" is probably exaggerated, and in the event of an attack generally yields to a treatment with paraffin. Certainly the furniture of what is termed the "Queen Anne period" is in great request at the present day, and as the period was so short during which it was made, the supply is necessarily limited.

We referred in the introduction to the first volume to the fact that the present series does not in any sense pretend to exhaust what is practically an inexhaustible subject. The series is merely intended to act as an introduction to the study of old English furniture, and to provide handbooks for collectors of moderate means. The many admirable books which have been already written on this subject seem to appeal mostly to persons who start collecting with that useful but not indispensable asset—a large income. In the present volume, although rare and expensive pieces are shown for historical reasons and to suggest standards of taste, a large number of interesting examples are also shown and described which are within the reach of persons of moderate incomes, and frequently an approximate price at which they should be acquired is indicated.

In collecting the photographs necessary for this volume we are indebted to the Director and Secretary of the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London, for placing the various exhibits at our disposal and particularly for causing a number of new exhibits to be specially photographed. However good a photograph may be, it can only be a ghost of the original, which should always, if possible, be examined. We would therefore strongly recommend readers when possible to examine the museum objects for themselves. The South Kensington collection, admirable as it is, is still far from complete, and increased public interest should contribute to its improvement. For the further loan of photographs we are also indebted to Mr. F. W. Phillips, of the Manor House, Hitchin, Herts; to Mr. J. H. Springett, High Street, Rochester, and others to whom we acknowledge our indebtedness in the text.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

It is with pleasure we acknowledge our obligations to the following authorities:

PERCY MACQUOID: "The Age of Walnut."

(The standard work on the furniture of this period.)

J. H. POLLEN: "Ancient and Modern Furniture and Woodwork."

An admirable little handbook and guide to the furniture and woodwork collection at the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington.

F. J. BRITTEN: "Old Clocks and Watches and their Makers."

(Exhaustive in its treatment, and fully illustrated. The standard book. A new edition has recently been published.)

JOHN STALKER: "Japanning and Varnishing."

(The earliest English book on this subject. Published in 1688 during the craze for japanned furniture.)

LAW: "History of Hampton Court," vol. iii.

ASHTON: "Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne."

EVELYN: "Diary."

MACAULAY: "History of England."

CHAPTER I: THE QUEEN ANNE PERIOD

WILLIAM AND MARY, 1689-1702

ANNE, 1702-1714

GEORGE I., 1714-1727

William the Third was a Dutchman and, although he was for thirteen years King of England, he remained a Dutchman until his death. His English was bad, his accent was rough, and his vocabulary limited. He had a Dutch guard, the friends whom he trusted were Dutch, and they were always about him, filling many of the offices of the Royal Household. He came to England as a foreigner and it remained to him a foreign country. His advent to the throne brought about certain changes in the style of furniture which are generally described as "the Dutch influence," which, however, had its origin at least as far back as the reign of Charles II. [1]

Both William and Mary were greatly interested in furnishing and furniture. They took up their residence at Hampton Court Palace soon after their coronation, and the place suited William so well and pleased him so much that it was very difficult to get him away from it. William was a great soldier and a great statesman, but he was more at his pleasure in the business of a country house than in the festivities and scandals of a court life, both of which he perhaps equally disliked. The Queen also cordially liked country life, and no less cordially disliked scandal. Mr. Law, in his interesting book on Hampton Court, mentions the story that Mary would check any person attempting to retail scandal by asking whether they had read her favourite sermon—Archbishop Tillotson on Evil Speaking. [2]

With the assistance of Sir Christopher Wren as Architect and Grinling Gibbon as Master Sculptor, great changes were made in the Palace at Hampton Court. The fogs and street smells of Whitehall drove William to the pure air of the country, and there was the additional attraction that the country around the palace reminded him in its flatness of his beloved Holland. When one of his Ministers ventured to remonstrate with him on his prolonged absences from London, he answered: "Do you wish to see me dead?" William, perhaps naturally, cared nothing for English tradition: he destroyed the state rooms of Henry VIII. and entrusted to Wren the task of rebuilding the Palace. The architect appears to have had a difficult task, as the King constantly altered the plans as they proceeded, and, it is said, did a good deal towards spoiling the great architect's scheme. In William's favour it must be admitted that he took the blame for the deficiencies and gave Wren the credit for the successes of the building. The result—the attachment of a Renaissance building to a Tudor palace—is more successful than might have been expected. The King's relations with Wren seem to have been of a very friendly sort. Mr. Law mentions the fact that Wren was at this time Grand Master of Freemasons; that he initiated the King into the mysteries of the craft; and that William himself reached the chair and presided over a lodge at Hampton Court Palace whilst it was being completed, which is, in the circumstances, an interesting example of the working rather than the speculative masonry. [3]

Mary was herself a model housewife, and filled her Court with wonder that she should labour so many hours each day at her needlework as if for her living. She covered the backs of chairs and couches with her work, which was described as "extremely neat and very well shadowed," although all trace of it has long since disappeared. It is appropriate to observe, as being related to decorative schemes and furnishing, that the taste for Chinese porcelain, which is so general at this day, was first introduced into England by Mary. Evelyn mentions in his diary (June 13, 1693) that he "saw the Queen's rare cabinets and collection of china which was wonderfully rich and plentiful." Macaulay expresses his opinion with his usual frankness. He writes: "Mary had acquired at The Hague a taste for the porcelain of China, and amused herself by forming at Hampton a vast collection of hideous images, and vases upon which houses, trees, bridges, and mandarins were depicted in outrageous defiance of all the laws of perspective. The fashion—a frivolous and inelegant fashion, it must be owned—which was thus set by the amiable Queen [4]

spread fast and wide. In a few years almost every great house in the kingdom contained a museum of these grotesque baubles. Even statesmen and generals were not ashamed to be renowned as judges of teapots and dragons; and satirists long continued to repeat that a fine lady valued her mottled green pottery quite as much as she valued her monkey and much more than she valued her husband." It is strange to consider in these days how greatly Macaulay, in this opinion, was out of his reckoning. There is, perhaps, no example of art or handicraft upon which the opinion of cultured taste in all countries is so unanimous as in its admiration for good Chinese porcelain, amongst which the Queen's collection (judging from the pieces still remaining at Hampton) must be classed. Mary was probably the first English queen to intimately concern herself with furniture. We have it on the authority of the Duchess of Marlborough that on the Queen's first visit to the palace she engaged herself "looking into every closet and conveniency, and turning up the quilts upon the beds, as people do when they come into an inn, and with no other concern in her appearance but such as they express."

We find in this period lavishly painted ceilings, woodwork carved by Grinling Gibbon and his school, fine needlework, upholstered bedsteads, and marble mantelpieces with diminishing shelves for the display of Delft and Chinese ware. The standard of domestic convenience, in one respect, could not, however, have been very high, if one may judge from the Queen's bathing-closet of this period at Hampton Court Palace. The bath is of marble and recessed into the wall, but it is more like a fountain than a bath, and its use in the latter connection must have been attended by inconveniences which modern women of much humbler station would decline to face.^[1]

Good specimens of the wood-carving of Grinling Gibbon (born 1648, died 1721) are to be seen at Hampton Court, to which Palace William III. appointed the artist Master Carver. He generally worked in soft woods, such as lime, pear and pine, but sometimes in oak. His subjects were very varied—fruit and foliage, wheat-ears and flowers, cupids and dead game, and even musical instruments—and were fashioned with amazing skill, resource, and ingenuity. He invented that school of English carving which is associated with his name. His fancy is lavish and his finish in this particular work has never been surpassed in this country; but it is doubtful whether his work is not overdone, and as such may not appeal to the purer taste. Often his masses of flowers and foliage too much suggest the unpleasant term which is usually applied to them, viz. "swags." Frequently nothing is left to the imagination in the boldness of his realism. [Fig. 1](#) shows a very happy example of his work over a mantelpiece in one of the smaller rooms in Hampton Court Palace, which is reproduced by the courtesy of the Lord Chamberlain, the copyright being the property of H.M. the King. Upon the shelf are pieces of china belonging to Queen Mary, but the portrait inset is of Queen Caroline, consort of George IV. In the grate is an antique fire-back, and on either side of the fire is a chair of the period of William and Mary.

The Court bedsteads (and probably on a smaller scale the bedsteads of the upper classes generally) continued to be at once elaborate and unhygienic, and were fitted with canopies and hangings of velvet and other rich stuffs. King William's bedstead was a great four-poster, hung with crimson velvet and surmounted at each corner with an enormous plume, which was much the same fashion of bedstead as at the beginning of the century. [Fig. 2](#) is an interesting photograph (reproduced by permission of the Lord Chamberlain) of three Royal bedsteads at Hampton Court, viz. those of William, Mary, and George II. The chairs and stools in front are of the period of William and Mary. The table is of later date. Most of the old furniture at Hampton Court, however, has been dispersed amongst the other Royal palaces.

An excellent idea of the appearance of a London dwelling-room of this period is shown in [Fig. 3](#). It was removed from No. 3 Clifford's Inn, and is now to be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The owner, John Penhallow, must have been well-to-do, as the fine carving about the mantelpiece and doors was expensive even in those days. The festoons of fruit and flowers of the school of Grinling Gibbon around the mantelpiece, in the centre of which are the arms of the owner, and the broken pediments over the doors surmounting the cherubs' heads, are characteristic of the time. The table with the marquetry top and "tied" stretcher is of the period. The chairs retained for a time that rigid resistance to the lines of the human form which marks the Stuart chairs; but very soon adapted themselves in a physiological sense.

What is termed the Queen Anne period of furniture may be said to date from the reigns of William and Mary (1689-1702), and Queen Anne (1702-1714), to that of George I. (1714-1727). The Dutch influence of William and Mary became Anglicised during the reign of Anne and the first George, and the influence remains to this day. Mahogany was introduced about 1720, and thenceforward the influence of Chippendale and his school came into force.

The Queen Anne style has probably been over-praised, a little misunderstood, and possibly a trifle harshly treated. Mr. Ernest Law, whose studies of this period we have already mentioned, describes it as "nothing better than an imitation of the bastard classic of Louis XIV., as distinguished from the so-called 'Queen Anne style' which never had any existence at all except in the brains of modern aesthetes and china maniacs," and as a case in point refers to Queen Anne's drawing-room at Hampton Court Palace. This verdict is no doubt a true one as regards the schemes of interior decoration, with their sprawling deities and the gaudy and discordant groupings of classical figures of Verrio and his school, to be seen at Hampton Court and other great houses. Verrio, as Macaulay wrote, "covered ceilings and staircases with Gorgons and Muses, Nymphs and Satyrs, Virtues and Vices, Gods quaffing nectar, and laurelled princes riding in triumph"—a decorative scheme which certainly does not err on the side of parsimony. The taste of a Court, however, is by no means a criterion of taste in domestic furniture. There can be

no doubt that to this period we are indebted for the introduction of various articles of furniture of great utility and unquestionable taste. The chairs and tables in particular, depending as they do for charm upon simple lines and the transverse grain of the wood, for neatness of design and good workmanship are unsurpassed. Amongst other pieces the bureaux and long-cased clocks made their appearance; also double chests of drawers or tallboys, mirrors for toilet-tables and wall decoration; and washstands came into general use, as well as articles like card-tables, powdering-tables, &c.

[10]

The houses of the wealthy were furnished with great magnificence and luxuriousness in a gaudy and ultra-decorative fashion. Restraint is the last quality to be found. Judging however from the many simple and charming specimens of walnut furniture surviving, the standard of comfort and good taste amongst the middle classes was high. Table glass was now manufactured in England; carpets were made at Kidderminster; chairs grew to be comfortably shaped; domestic conveniences in the way of chests of drawers, writing bureaux, and mirrors were all in general use in many middle-class houses. Mr. Pollen, whose handbook on the Victoria and Albert collection is so much appreciated, writes of the Queen Anne furniture as being of a "genuine English style marked by great purity and beauty."

Anne, the second daughter of James II., was the last of the Stuarts, with whom, however, she had little in common, and indeed it is with something of an effort that we think of her as a Stuart at all. Personally she had no more influence upon the period which bears her name than the Goths had upon Gothic architecture. The term "Queen Anne" has grown to be a conveniently descriptive term for anything quaint and pretty. We are all familiar with the Queen Anne house of the modern architect, with its gables and sharply pitched roof. This, however, is probably suggested by various rambles in picturesque country districts in England and Holland; but it has nothing in common with the actual houses of the period under review.

[11]

The bulk of the genuine furniture which has come down to us was probably from the houses of the merchant classes, the period being one of great commercial activity. The condition of the poor, however, was such that they could not concern themselves with furniture. Mr. Justin McCarthy, in his book on these times, estimates that one-fifth of the population were paupers. A few rude tables and chairs, a chest, truckle-beds, and possibly a settle, would have made up the possessions of the working-class house; and it is probable that not until the nineteenth century was there any material improvement in their household surroundings.

It was a time in which the coffee-and chocolate-houses flourished; when Covent Garden and Leicester Square were fashionable neighbourhoods; when the Sedan chair was the fashionable means of transit; when the police were old men with rattles who, sheltered in boxes guarded the City; and when duels were fought, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The coffee-house was a lively factor in the life of the times: although wines were also sold, coffee was the popular drink. The price for a dish of coffee and a seat by a good fire was commonly one penny, or perhaps three-halfpence, although to these humble prices there were aristocratic exceptions. Anderton's Hotel in Fleet Street, "The Bay Tree" in St. Swithin's Lane, and the now famous "Lloyd's" are interesting developments of the Queen Anne coffee-houses. Coffee itself was retailed at about seven shillings per pound. Chocolate-houses were small in number, but included names so well known at the present time as "White's" and the "Cocoa Tree." Chocolate was commonly twopence the dish. "Fancy the beaux," Thackeray writes, "thronging the chocolate-houses, tapping their snuff-boxes as they issue thence, their periwigs appearing over the red curtains."

[12]

Tea-drinking was a social function and mainly a domestic operation, and to its popularity we owe the number of small light tables of this period.

Snuff, or the fan supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

The price of tea fluctuated very much—some years it was much cheaper than others, varying from 10s. to 30s. per lb., although it is said that in the cheaper sorts old infused leaves were dried and mixed with new ones.

[13]

As regards pottery and porcelain, the Chinese was in great request, following, no doubt, on the fashion set by Queen Mary. The English factories—Worcester, Derby, Chelsea, Bow, Wedgwood, and Minton—only started in the last half of the eighteenth century. Mr. Ashton, in his interesting book on "Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne," quotes the following advertisement, which points to the continued popularity of decorative china:

"Whereas the New East India Company did lately sell all their China Ware, These are to advertise that a very large parcel thereof (as Broken and Damaged) is now to be sold by wholesale and Retail, extremely cheap at a Warehouse in Dyer's Yard. Note.—It is very fit to furnish Escrutiores, Cabinets, Corner Cupboards or Spriggs, where it usually stands for ornament only."

This fashion first brought into use the various forms of cabinets used for the display of china. The earliest pieces would therefore date from the end of the seventeenth, or the beginning of the eighteenth century.

[14]

In the first volume of this series we referred to a characteristic of Elizabethan woodwork, viz. inlaying—the laying-in of small pieces of one or several kinds of wood in places cut out of the surface of another kind. In the period under review two further practices are deserving of special

notice. The first is veneering, which consists of wholly covering one sort of wood (frequently a common wood, such as deal or pine, but also oak) with a thin layer of choice wood—walnut, mahogany, &c. The object of veneering was not for purposes of deception, as it was not intended to produce the effect that the whole substance was of the finer sort of wood; but by means of applying these thin overlays a greater choice of wood was possible, and a more beautiful effect was produced by the juxtaposition of the various grains.

Although at the present time the term veneer is frequently used as one of approbrium, the principle it stands for is a perfectly honest one. It is very much the same as the application of the thin strips of marble to the pillars and walls of St. Mark's at Venice, which is called incrustation, and of which Ruskin writes in the "Stones of Venice." The basis of St. Mark's is brick, which is covered by an incrustation or veneer of costly and beautiful marbles, by which rich and varied colour effects are produced which would have been impossible in solid marble. The same principle applies to veneers of wood, in which there is likewise no intention to deceive but rather a desire to make the most of the materials on hand. It would have been impossible to construct a great many cabinets of solid walnut-wood, nor would the effect have been so satisfactory, because, as already pointed out, the fact of veneers being laid in thin strips immensely increases the choice of woods and facilitates the composition of pleasing effects. There is, moreover, often a greater nicety of workmanship in the making of veneered furniture than in the solid article, and it is indeed often a complaint that the doing up of old veneered furniture is so expensive and troublesome. In old days veneers were cut by hand—sometimes one-eighth of an inch thick—but the modern veneer is, of course, cut by machinery, and is often a mere shaving.

[15]

In the period under discussion walnut-veneering reached great perfection, beautiful effects being produced by cross-banding various strips and varying the course of the grains and the shades. Oak was first used as a base, but later commoner woods such as deal.

It is a mistake to condemn an article because the basis is not of oak. As a matter of fact, after a time oak went out of use as a basis for the reason that it was unsatisfactory, the veneer having a tendency to come away from it. We frequently find the front of a drawer is built of pine, to take the veneer, whilst the sides and bottom of the drawer are of oak.

[16]

Marquetry, which is also a feature in furniture of this period, is a combination of inlaying and veneering. A surface is covered with a veneer and the desired design is cut out and filled in with other wood. Its later developments are of French origin, and it was first introduced into England from Holland towards the end of the seventeenth century, after James II. (who had been a wanderer in Holland) came to the throne.

Most arts date back to ancient times; and the arts of woodcraft are no exceptions. Inlaying, veneering, and wood-carving reach back to the temple of Solomon; and the Egyptians also practised them. Ancient inlay, moreover, was not confined to woods—ivory, pearls, marbles, metals, precious stones all being requisitioned.

During the reigns of William and Mary, Anne, and George the First, events of great importance transpired. St. Paul's, that great monument to Wren and Renaissance architecture, was opened; the Marlborough wars were fought; the South Sea Bubble was blown and burst; Sir Christopher Wren and Grinling Gibbon completed their work; Marlborough House and Blenheim were built; Addison, Pope, and Daniel Defoe were at work; Gibraltar was taken; England and Scotland were united; the Bank of England was incorporated; and last, but not least, the National Debt started.

[17]

CHAPTER II: SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN AND GRINLING GIBBON

The temper of a nation is reflected in its architecture and, in a lesser degree, in its furniture. When we look at the furniture of the last of the Stuarts, Mary II. and her sister Anne, we see written all over it in large letters one great virtue—sobriety.

[18]

In the oak furniture of the last of the Tudors and the first of the Stuarts (Elizabeth and James I.) we find the same sober note; but in the main it is more essentially English. In the Augustan era of Elizabeth we certainly see in the more pretentious examples of Court-cupboards and cabinets the influence of the Renaissance; but the furniture made by the people for the people is simply English in form and decoration.

During the troublous times of the two Charles and to the end of the revolution which placed William and Mary on the throne, the country was alternately in the throes of gaiety and Puritanism; and a dispassionate view leads one to suppose that "Merrie England" had the greater leaning towards merriment. The people of England knew well enough that sobriety was good for them, and Cromwell gave it in an unpalatable form. The remedy was less to the country's liking than the disease, and with the Restoration in 1660 the passions of the nation ran riot in the opposite extreme.

[19]

The final lesson came with the twenty-nine years of misrule under Charles II. and James II. Having drained the cup of degradation to the dregs, the country set about her real reformation by the aid of Dutch William, himself the grandson of a Stuart, and his cousin-consort Anne, the daughter of the self-deposed James.

James II. had learnt his lesson from the errors of his brother Charles, but was not wise enough to fully profit by it. He realised that misrule had stretched his subjects' patience to the breaking-point, and during his short reign there was a certain amount of surface calm. But beneath was the continual struggle for absolutism on the part of the monarch and emancipation on the part of the people. The subject is familiar to students of history.

With the advent of the Orange *régime* we find a distinct revolution in English furniture. There is no evidence of a sudden change. We find comparatively severe examples during James II.'s reign and flamboyant patterns dating from the days of William. The transitional period was shorter than usual, and once the tide had gathered strength in its flow there was very little ebb. [20]

The Civil troubles in the country had given a severe check to the arts: the influence of the Renaissance upon furniture was upon the wane, and the ground was lying fallow and hungry for the new styles which may be said to have landed with William of Orange in Torbay in 1688.

The main influence in the furniture was Dutch, and the Dutch had been to a large extent influenced by a wave of Orientalism.

Twenty-five years before this, England's most renowned, if not greatest, architect had designed his first ecclesiastical building—the Chapel of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge—in the classical style which he made famous in England.

Christopher Wren was born in 1631 or 1632. He was son of Dr. Christopher Wren, Dean of Windsor, and nephew of Matthew Wren, Bishop of Ely, who, to celebrate his release from the Tower, built Pembroke Hall Chapel in 1663, employing his nephew as architect.

In 1664, when Christopher Wren was about thirty-two years of age, he came in contact with John Evelyn, the diarist, who in his journal, under date July 13, writes of him as that "miracle of a youth." The acquaintanceship ripened into a friendship, only broken by Evelyn's death in 1706. From Evelyn's diary we are able to glean many things concerning the then rising young architect. The idea of the Royal Society was the outcome of a meeting in 1660 of several scientists in Wren's room after one of the lectures at Gresham College. On being approached on the desirability of forming the Society, Charles II. gave his assent and encouragement to the project, and we learn that one of the first transactions of the Society was an account of Wren's pendulum experiment. The Society was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1663. [21]

It would appear that Wren had no world-wide reputation as an architect at the time, but, probably through the instrumentality of his friend Evelyn, he was appointed by the King as assistant to Sir John Denham, the Surveyor-General of Works, and in the opinion of one of his biographers, Lucy Phillimore, "the practical experience learned in the details of the assistant-surveyor's work was afterwards very serviceable to him."

We find him occupied in 1664 in plans for repairing old St. Paul's and in building the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford, which was finished in 1669. During the plague of 1665 Wren made a tour of the Continent, and there absorbed ideas which fructified in the new style of classical architecture which has made his name famous. During further discussions concerning the much-needed repairs to St. Paul's came the fire of London in 1666. This solved the difficulty, for St. Paul's was left a gaunt skeleton in the City of Desolation. Wren's plans for the rebuilding of the City were accepted by the King, but were never carried out in anything like their entirety. All attempts to patch up the cathedral were abandoned in 1673, and the ground was cleared for the new foundations. The architect and his master mason laid the first stone on June 21, 1675. The cathedral and the story of its building is familiar to us all. The great architect, having drawn the circle for the dome, called to a workman to bring him a piece of stone to mark the centre. The man brought a fragment of an old tombstone on which was the single word "Resurgam." All present took it as a good omen. We all know how the last stone of the lantern was laid thirty-five years afterwards by the architect's own son in the presence of his father. During those thirty-five years the great freemason's hands had been full, and in the City which rose from the ashes of the fire of 1666 no less than fifty-four churches were either built or restored by him. In addition, we find that the rebuilding or restoration of thirty-six halls of the City guilds, as well as upwards of fifty notable buildings—hospitals, colleges, palaces, cathedrals and churches—in London and the provinces, is laid to his credit. [22]

St. Paul's Cathedral, Wren's City churches, and the Monument, would in themselves make London famous amongst the cities of the world. The Monument was erected to commemorate the rebuilding of the City. The inscription thereon absurdly attributes the origin of the fire to the Papists. Pope satirises it in his "Moral Essays": [23]

London's Column pointing to the skies
Like a tall bully lifts the head and lies.

Chief, for beauty, amongst the churches is St. Stephen's, Walbrook. Canova, the great sculptor, after paying a visit to England for the purpose of seeing the Elgin marbles, was asked if he would like to return to the country. "Yes," he replied, "that I might again see St. Paul's Cathedral, Somerset House, and St. Stephen's, Walbrook."

A dozen or more of Wren's churches have been swept off the map of London, in many cases with a wantonness amounting to sacrilege; but we can still rejoice in the possession of such gems as

St. Stephen's, Walbrook; St. Nicholas, Cole Abbey; and St. Mary Abchurch, with its flat roof and cupola supported on eight arches. St. Dunstan's in the East, near the Custom House, still stands testifying to the fact that Wren could restore a church without spoiling it. St. Dunstan's, built in the latest style of perpendicular Gothic, was left a mere shell after the fire. Wren added the fine tower, and capped it with the curious and graceful spire supported on flying buttresses. It is said that the architect stood on London Bridge with a telescope anxiously watching the removal of the scaffolding from the spire. It is scarcely credible, however, that such a man should doubt his own powers of building. This legend recalls the story of the building of the Town Hall at Windsor in 1686. The spacious chamber on the street level is used as a corn exchange and above is the great hall. The anxious town councillors declared that the great room above would collapse. Wren knew exactly how much his four walls and great beams could bear, but, to appease the burghers, he promised to place four columns at the intersections of the beams. He purposely built them about two inches short, and, to this day, after the lapse of two hundred and twenty-five years, there is still a two-inch space between the top of each column and the ceiling it is supposed to support. On the exterior of the building are two statues given by Wren in 1707: one of Queen Anne and the other of her Danish consort, Prince George. Our good Christopher could flatter on occasion. The inscription to Prince George in his Roman costume reads, *inter alia*:

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Heroi omni saeculo venerando.

Underneath the figure of Queen Anne is the legend:

Arte tua sculptor non est imitabilis Anna
Annae vis similem sculpere sculpe Deam.

The local rhyming and free translation runs:

Artist, thy skill is vain! Thou can'st not trace
The semblance of the matchless Anna's face!
Thou might'st as well to high Olympus fly
And carve the model of some Deity!

We admit this is a very free and extended translation, but it passes current locally. To say the least, it is high praise; but Wren had a staunch friend in Queen Anne, and every eye makes its own beauty.

The exigencies of the time called for a great architect, and he appeared in the person of Christopher Wren: they called for a great artist to adorn the master's buildings, and he appeared in the guise of Grinling Gibbon.

The discovery of Gibbon in an obscure house at Deptford goes to the credit of gossipy John Evelyn, who on January 18, 1671, writes: "This day, I first acquainted his Majesty (Charles II.) with that incomparable young man Gibbon, whom I had lately met with in an obscure place by mere accident, in a field in our parish, near Sayes Court. I found him shut in; but looking in at the window, I perceived him carving that large cartoon or crucifix of Tintoretto, a copy of which I had brought myself from Venice, where the original painting remains. I asked if I might enter; he opened the door civilly to me, and I saw him about such a work as for the curiosity of handling, drawing and studious exactness, I never had before seen in all my travels. I questioned why he worked in such an obscure and lonesome place; it was that he might apply himself to his profession without interruption, and wondered not a little how I found him out. I asked him if he were unwilling to be known to some great man, for that I believed it might turn to his profit, he answered, he was yet but a beginner, but would not be sorry to sell off that piece; on demanding the price he said £100. In good earnest, the very frame was worth the money, there being nothing in nature so tender and delicate as the flowers and festoons about it, and yet the work was very strong; in the piece was more than one hundred figures of men, &c.... Of this young artist, together with my manner of finding him out, I acquainted the King, and begged that he would give me leave to bring him and his work to Whitehall, for that I would venture my reputation with his Majesty that he had never seen anything approach it, and that he would be exceedingly pleased, and employ him. The King said he would himself go see him. This was the first notice his Majesty ever had of Mr. Gibbon."

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The King evidently did not "go see him," for under date March 1 we read: "I caused Mr. Gibbon to bring to Whitehall his excellent piece of carving, where being come, I advertised his Majesty.... No sooner was he entered and cast his eye on the work, but he was astonished at the curiosity of it, and having considered it a long time and discoursed with Mr. Gibbon whom I brought to kiss his hand, he commanded it should be immediately carried to the Queen's side to show her. It was carried up into her bed-chamber, where she and the King looked on and admired it again; the King being called away, left us with the Queen, believing she would have bought it, it being a crucifix; but when his Majesty was gone, a French peddling woman, one Madame de Boord, who used to bring petticoats and fans and baubles, out of France to the ladies, began to find fault with several things in the work, which she understood no more than an ass, or a monkey, so as in a kind of indignation, I caused the person who brought it to carry it back to the Chamber, finding the Queen so much governed by an ignorant French woman, and this incomparable artist had his

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labour only for his pains, which not a little displeased me; he not long after sold it for £80, though well worth £100, without the frame, to Sir George Viner. His Majesty's Surveyor, Mr. Wren, faithfully promised to employ him. I having also bespoke his Majesty for his work at Windsor, which my friend Mr. May, the architect there, was going to alter and repair universally."

Grinling Gibbon was born in 1648, and so the "incomparable young man" would have been about twenty-three years of age when he sailed into Royal favour. We do not know the whereabouts of the carved cartoon after Tintoretto; but we shall find at the Victoria and Albert Museum a carving by Gibbon, measuring 6 ft. in height by 4 ft. 4 in. in width, of the "Stoning of St. Stephen." It is executed in limewood and lance-wood. Walpole, in his "Catalogue of Painters," writes of the "Stoning of St. Stephen," which was purchased and placed by the Duke of Chandos at Canons,^[2] as the carving which had "struck so good a judge" as Evelyn. It is palpably not identical with the Tintoret subject which Evelyn describes as "being a crucifix." [Fig. 10](#) in Chapter III. is a remarkable example of Gibbon's carving of fruits, flowers, and foliage.

[29]

Readers who are familiar with the Belgian churches will remember the wonderful carvings at Brussels and Mecklin by Drevot and Laurens, who were pupils of Gibbon. They out-Gibbon Gibbon in their realism.

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In [Fig. 4](#), photographed for this book by the South Kensington authorities, we give an illustration of a carving in pinewood of a pendant of flowers attributed to Gibbon. It originally decorated the Church of St. Mary Somerset, Thames Street, E.C., built 1695—one of Wren's City churches so wantonly destroyed. To see Gibbon's wood carving at its best we must go to St. Paul's Cathedral, Windsor Castle, and Hampton Court Palace. At Windsor we shall also see carved marble panels of trophies, emblems and realistic fruits, flowers and shell-fish on the pedestal of the statue of Charles II. At Charing Cross we have another example of his stone carving on the pedestal of the statue of Charles the Martyr.

We have already referred to the Church of St. Mary Abchurch in Abchurch Lane, between King William Street and Cannon Street, City. It was built in 1686, eleven years after the first stone of St. Paul's was laid. It also serves for the parish of St. Laurence Pountney. It lies in a quiet backwater off the busy stream, and the flagged courtyard is still surrounded by a few contemporary houses. Externally it is not beautiful, but Wren and Gibbon expended loving care on the really beautiful interior. The soft light from the quaint circular and round-headed windows casts a gentle radiance over the carved festoons of fruit, palm-leaves and the "pelican in her piety."

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Just across, on the other side of Cannon Street, is another backwater, Laurence Pountney Hill. Two of the old Queen Anne houses remain, No. 1 and No. 2, with beautiful old hooded doorways dated 1703. The circular hoods are supported by carved lion-headed brackets. The jambs are ornamented with delicate interlaced carving. No. 2 has been mutilated as to its windows, and a modern excrescence has been built on to the ground floor; but No. 1 appears to be much as it left the builders' hands in 1703, and still possesses the old wide staircase with twisted "barley-sugar" balusters and carved rose newel pendants. These houses may or may not have been designed by Wren. They seem to bear the impress of his genius, and in any case they give us a glimpse—and such glimpses are all too rare—of the homes of the City fathers, just as the little church across Cannon Street brings us in touch with their religious life in the early days of Queen Anne.

[Fig. 5](#) represents an interesting series of turned balusters taken from old houses of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. They are executed in oak, lime, ash and pinewood—mostly the latter; and many of the details will be found repeated in the furniture legs of the Queen Anne period. The photograph was specially taken for this volume by the courtesy of the Director and Secretary of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

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[Fig. 6](#) represents a contemporary doorway of a room formerly at No. 3 Clifford's Inn. It is of oak, with applied carvings in cedar of acanthus-leaf work, enclosing a cherub's head and a broken pediment terminating in volutes. We shall find members of the same cherub family on the exterior of St. Mary Abchurch. [Fig. 7](#) is the overmantel of the same room with a marble mantelpiece of somewhat later date. This room, now at the Victoria and Albert Museum, was erected in 1686 by John Penhallow, who resided there till 1716.

[Fig. 8](#) is a beautiful doorway carved in yellow pine, with Corinthian columns and pediment. We shall find similar pediments in the tower of Wren's church, St. Andrew's, Holborn. This doorway with the carved mantelpiece ([Fig. 9](#)) came from an old house in Carey Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. These belong to the early part of the eighteenth century.

These are but a few isolated examples of beautiful settings to the furniture of the period of the revival of classical architecture in England. Such things are not for the modest collector, who will content himself with the chairs, tables, and bureaux of the period—articles, in the main, of severe outline devoid of carving, and relying for effect much upon the rich tones of the wood employed, but withal eminently beautiful, inasmuch as they were and are eminently useful.

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CHAPTER III: MIRRORS, STOOLS, AND SOME NOTES ON A QUEEN ANNE BEDROOM

The mirror, at the present time, is so generally an accepted necessary of life, and so

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indispensable in many of its situations, that it may seem remarkable that not until the sixteenth century was it in anything like general use in England. The pleasure and interest of reflection must have been felt from the time when "the reindeer roared where Paris roars to-night." Still water must have been the first mirror of the first man and woman in which they discovered their astonished faces, and where it is possible that, like Narcissus, they fell in love with their own reflections. Thus we find Eve saying in "Paradise Lost":

I thither went
And with unexperienced thought, and laid me down
On the green bank; to look into the clear
Smooth lake, that to me seem'd a second sky.
As I bent down to look, just opposite,
A shape within the wat'ry gleam appear'd,
Bending to look on me.

No doubt a reflecting surface was one of the first things that human ingenuity concerned itself about. Brass mirrors were used by the Hebrews, and mirrors of bronze by the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans; surviving specimens may be seen in the museums. Silver mirrors were also used in very early times. Glass mirrors are also of ancient origin. Sauzay, in his work on "Glass-making," quotes from Aristotle as follows: "If metals and stones are to be polished to serve as mirrors, glass and crystal have to be lined with a sheet of metal to give back the image presented to them." And here we have the foreshadowing of the mercury-backed sheet of glass of modern times. [35]

In England mirrors of polished metal were well known in Anglo-Saxon times, and from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries the ladies carried mirrors at their girdles or in their pockets. Venice has always been the home of glass-work, and it was there, in the early fourteenth century, that the immediate prototypes of our modern glass mirrors were made. For something like a century and a half the Venetians had the monopoly of the making of the best mirrors. Their secrets were carefully guarded, and any workman emigrating had his nearest relative imprisoned. It is interesting to note in passing that in Jan van Eyck's picture in the National Gallery, London, painted in 1434, there is a framed convex wall mirror which has an astonishingly modern look. It is difficult to say whether or not this is made of glass, but it shows, of course, that mirrors were used for wall decoration at that time. This picture, by the way, is very interesting, as providing undeniable evidence as to the nature of the Dutch furniture of the early fifteenth century. [36]

As regards the early history of the mirror in Britain, there is a glass mirror in Holyrood Palace in the apartments used by Queen Mary the First and said to have belonged to her. At Hampton Court there are mirrors belonging to the period of William III. and later, some of which have bevelled edges and borders of blue glass in the form of rosettes. Glass mirrors were made in England by Italian workmen early in the seventeenth century, but not extensively until about 1670, when the Duke of Buckingham established works in Lambeth, where mirrors were made. The edges were bevelled in Venetian fashion. We find Evelyn writing in his diary under date of September 19, 1676:

"To Lambeth to that rare magazine of marble, to take order for chimney pieces, &c., for Mr. Godolphin's house. The owner of the workes had built for himselfe a pretty dwelling house; this Dutchman had contracted with the Genoese for all their marble. We also saw the Duke of Buckingham's Glass Worke, where they made high vases of metal as cleare, ponderous and thick as chrystal; also looking-glasses far larger and better than any that come from Venice." [37]

As will be seen at Hampton Court, the glass in each of the large mirrors of this time is in two pieces, for the reason that, by the methods then in use, it was not possible to make larger sheets. This method of making mirrors in two pieces is followed even in the present day in modern copies of old mirrors. It was, no doubt, a cause of regret to the old makers that they could not turn out a large glass in one sheet, and they would no doubt have been astonished to think that succeeding ages would deliberately copy their defect. A collector will not, probably, come across a mirror earlier than William and Mary, and he should have little difficulty in finding genuine mirrors of the next reign—Queen Anne—which are at once interesting and inexpensive. Mr. Clouston thinks that "the wall mirrors of the Queen Anne period may very well rank with the best furniture of their time. They are simple yet satisfying, and rich without extravagance."

A mirror is not a mere looking-glass, although in this connection it has always been greatly appreciated. Mirrors bring a sense of space to a small room, and make a larger room appear more spacious. In the King's writing-closet at Hampton Court there is a mirror over the chimney-piece which provides a vista of all the rooms on the south side of the state apartments. Great furniture-designers from the time of Grinling Gibbon to that of Chippendale have appreciated the opportunities offered by mirrors for the purposes of decoration. [38]

[Fig. 10](#) is a mirror-frame of carved limewood by Grinling Gibbon to be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is a rich and wonderful example of chisel play, but, like his work in general, does not satisfy a taste which inclines to less resplendent decoration. Such a mirror is probably not within the reach of any collector, great or small; and it is even probable—at least as regards the small collector—that, if by a stroke of fortune such a piece descended to him, he would find that it would scarcely harmonise with any ordinary scheme of decoration. Its presence would be as embarrassing as the entertainment of Royalty in a suburban home.

The ordinary types—and they are many—of Queen Anne mirrors can with perfect propriety find places in almost any room in any house of taste, and on the walls of hall or staircase they are at once interesting and decorative. Particularly are they in harmony with the surroundings of a "Queen Anne" bedroom. In this connection, however, a word of warning is in place regarding the old glass. This is very well on the wall mirrors, but in the mirror for the toilet-table it should be replaced by new glass. Nothing lasts for ever, and it is rare that the old glasses fully retain their reflecting powers. Old mirrors are bad to shave by, and are, moreover, extremely unpopular with ladies. The art of furnishing consists of a tactful combination of whatever is best in the old and the new.

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[Figs. 11](#) and [12](#) are simple mirrors of the Queen Anne period. [Fig. 11](#) is a wall glass with a pleasing scroll outline, and [Fig. 12](#) is a toilet-table glass characteristic of the period, the gilt inner moulding or "embroidery" being an interesting feature. We find similar decorative devices to the above on many of the mirrors of this time, and such examples should be purchasable at about two guineas each.

[Figs. 13](#) and [14](#) are more elaborate and expensive mirrors, the broken pediments in each case suggesting the influence of Sir Christopher Wren. Although the architectural inspiration, which was absolute in the Gothic periods and strong in the Elizabethan, was very much less marked in the time of Queen Anne, still the classical influence of Wren's Renaissance style is shown in many ways, and particularly in the many varieties of the broken pediment which are favourite forms of decoration for the tops of mirror frames. [Fig. 13](#), in addition to the broken pediment, is decorated on the frame with egg-and-tongue mouldings, and on the base with a bust of a cherub in high relief. [Fig. 14](#) is surmounted by a boldly carved figure of an eagle enclosed by the broken pediment. On either side are carved festoons of fruit and flowers, possibly suggested by the work of Grinling Gibbon. These important mirrors, interesting and effective as they are, require large rooms to set them off.

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Simple mirrors, as in [Figs. 11](#) and [12](#), present no difficulties regarding their disposal. The more elaborate ones, however, apart from their expensiveness, should not be purchased unless there is a suitable place in which to hang them. This suggests a maxim which applies to the collection of any sort of furniture, viz. not to purchase any piece until you have decided what to do with it. Adherence to this rule may involve the occasional loss of a bargain, but it avoids confusion and possible domestic complications. We knew an enthusiastic collector who resisted the purchase of old examples with the greatest difficulty. His wife, on the other hand, whilst appreciating possibly as keenly as her husband the attractions of the antique, was also fastidious regarding the prompt settlement of tradesmen's bills. The climax was reached one day when the husband, instead of settling certain pressing accounts, attended a sale and purchased an enormous Dutch wardrobe which was found to be at least eighteen inches too tall for any room in the house.

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Another form of decoration applied to mirror-frames of the Queen Anne period was that known as "Gesso" work, whereby a design was built into relief with layers of size and plaster applied with a brush. It gives scope for delicate line work, and is often softer than carving. [Figs. 15](#) and [16](#) are mirrors decorated with Gesso ornament, to which, however, little justice can be done in a photograph.

[Fig. 17](#) is a fine mirror of pinewood with Gesso ornamentation, in which the broken pediment form has taken a somewhat fanciful shape.

In [Fig. 18](#) the broken pediment appears in a more strictly architectural form. This mirror, which is of painted pine, was formerly in the "Flask" Tavern, Ebury Square, Pimlico. Although its date would be about 1700, it is clearly in its mouldings reminiscent of the Jacobean period, which style no doubt continued in popularity amongst the poorer classes. This mirror is an interesting instance of the merging of the two styles.

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Marquetry was also used on the mirror-frames of this period, an example in a broad frame inlaid with a floral pattern being shown in [Fig. 19](#). This mirror was sold for seventeen guineas.

[Fig. 20](#) is an example of a toilet mirror of the Queen Anne period, the front of which lets down with a flap, after the manner of a bureau, revealing a nest of drawers. This form of mirror is not often met with, and an opportunity of acquiring one at a reasonable price should not be neglected. [Fig. 21](#) is of similar construction mounted on a stand, an architectural touch being given by the pilasters on either side of the mirror. This pattern is singularly simple and charming.

Stools of the period under review are generally difficult and somewhat expensive to acquire, but these are not reasons for giving up hope. A type of the William and Mary stool is shown in [Fig. 22](#). The scrolled feet and X-shaped stretcher are characteristic. Stools were very popular articles of furniture at this time. We find them in numbers in contemporary prints, and they continued to be used as seats at meal-times, as no doubt (providing the table were low enough) they were more comfortable than the stiff-backed chairs of the time. In the face of decided evidence of their prevalence in the Queen Anne period, their scarcity to-day is somewhat remarkable.

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In the coloured frontispiece is shown a simple stool of the time of the early Queen Anne period covered with Petit-point needlework, with which the ladies of that period delighted to occupy themselves. This needlework—which, in addition to being used as a covering for furniture, was also framed to hang on the walls—is often patterned with quaint trees, people, goats, dogs, and a sprinkling of lovers and birds. A stool such as is shown in the frontispiece makes an admirable seat for a knee-hole writing-table.

[Fig. 23](#) is a large stool of the Queen Anne period with scallop-shell decoration, cabriole legs and an early form of the claw-and-ball feet. It is covered with contemporary needlework.

A Queen Anne bedroom conjures up the possibility of composing a charming scheme of interior decoration. First it is necessary to face the inevitable and accept the position that a modern bedstead is essential. This should be made of walnut-wood, and the ends shaped after the manner of the solid splats in the simple chairs of the period. Such bedsteads are made by several of the good modern furniture firms. They are not, of course, literal reproductions of the bedsteads of the period, which were of the four-poster order, but they will be found to be in good taste. Upon this bed should lie a reproduction of the bed-covers of the period in a pattern boldly coloured and Oriental in design. The floor should be covered by antique Persian rugs (or modern reproductions). A walnut toilet-table should stand in the window (*see* [Fig. 64](#)). Upon it should rest a toilet-glass (*see* [Fig. 12](#)), and in front of it, if possible, a stool covered with the needlework of the period (*see* *Frontispiece*). This stool will, however, be difficult to obtain, and its place could be taken by a simple chair of the period (*see* [Figs. 32](#) and [34](#)). Two other simple chairs should find places around the room, upon one side of which should be placed a walnut tallboy (*see* [Fig. 56](#)) surmounted by a piece of Chinese blue-and-white. We cannot too strongly emphasise the desirability of associating old Chinese blue-and-white pottery with eighteenth-century furniture. The washstand of the period (too small to be efficient) should be replaced by an unobtrusive wooden table painted white, the top of which should be covered with tiles in a shade which does not disagree with a reproduction of an old "Spode" or "Mason's Ironstone" toilet set.

Toilet sets, as we understand the term to-day, were unknown in the days of Queen Anne. Common earthenware pitchers and basins, or at best English and Dutch Delft, did duty until the rise of the great Staffordshire factories late in the eighteenth century. Original "Spode" or "Mason" ware would not be of earlier dates than 1770 and 1804 respectively, and so quite out of the Queen Anne period. We merely mention these two styles of so-called "Indian" decorations as being most suitable for the purpose in hand. We might, indeed, happen upon an eighteenth-century blue-and-white service; but all these early ewers and basins, like the early washstands, are altogether too diminutive for modern requirements. The reproductions, whilst retaining the old decoration, are built in more generous proportions.

For wall covering a plain white-or champagne-coloured paper might be adopted, and for wall decoration one or two old mirrors (*see* [Figs. 11](#) and [15](#)) and some reproductions of Dutch interiors by the old masters, framed in broad black frames, would be in harmony with the surroundings. A difficulty in composing a Queen Anne bedroom is to find a suitable hanging wardrobe. The marquetry hanging-press or wardrobe of the period, with its bombè-shaped lower section, is somewhat heavy in appearance, except in a large room, and is, moreover, expensive to acquire. Failing a hanging cupboard in the wall, a simple plain cupboard should be built and painted white. Such a cupboard at least strikes no false note, and is greatly to be preferred to a modern wardrobe or one of another period.

In this connection a schedule of the cost to the authors of furnishing a similar bedroom may be of interest.

	£	s.	d.
Walnut tallboy	10	10	0
3 simple Queen Anne chairs	9	0	0
1 " " toilet-table	5	0	0
1 " " toilet mirror	2	2	0
1 " " wall mirror	2	2	0

	£ 28	14	0

To this, therefore, must be added the various modern reproductions, including the bedstead: the total cost of the room would be about fifty pounds. The result is, of course, a combination of the old and the new—the best points of each being preserved—and the effect will be found harmonious.

CHAPTER IV: CHAIRS AND TABLES

In volume one we left the chair at the time of King James II. when it was composed of tall and straight lines, generally cane-backed and cane-seated, with a carved stretcher fixed rather higher than midway between the two front legs. Such pieces would not, of course, have been found in the homes of the poor. Historical books, for the most part, concern themselves very much with the affairs of courts and the practice of battles, but very little with the habits and surroundings of the bulk of the people. We know that the amount of poverty and crime at the beginning of the eighteenth century was enormous, and the social condition of the people being such, it is unlikely that their homes could have been either comfortable or decently furnished. Very little of the wealth of the country percolated through the middle class to the poor; but there is no doubt that as regards the middle-class homes, they had by the beginning of the eighteenth century reached a very tolerable standard of social comfort and convenience.

It is probable that a good deal of this standard of comfort was attributable to Dutch influence. The sense of home comfort seems to have been developed in Holland in early times. In the

picture of John Arnolfini and his wife in the National Gallery, London, painted by Jan van Eyck, who lived between 1390 and 1440, there is a vivid and interesting glimpse of the furniture of this period. This picture should be studied by all interested in furniture. In the bedroom shown in the picture we find, in addition to the bed with its heavy red stuff hangings, a coffer, probably for clothes; a tall chair with a Gothic traceried top and a red cushion; a smaller chair with a red cushion; a carpet of Persian pattern; a brass chandelier; and a mirror reflecting the room and its two occupants. The mirror is in a round wooden frame decorated with small medallion panels, with paintings illustrative of the Passion of our Lord. The room is lighted by casement windows, and the whole effect suggests a degree of comfort creditable to the taste of the fifteenth century.

A very notable feature in the male costume of the time of William and Mary was the enormous periwig, which was considered a sign of social importance. A man would not wear his hat (a *chapeau-bras*), but in order that his wig might not be disarranged would carry his hat under his arm. It is rather strange that a hard-headed business man like William should have countenanced such a fashion by wearing a great periwig himself. It appears to have been a custom to comb these wigs in the coffee-houses, for which purpose each gallant carried an elegant comb. The men's hats were adorned with feathers, and they also wore full-skirted coats decorated with lace and embroidery, stockings, breeches, buckled shoes, and huge cuffs garnished with lace.

[49]

The ladies also wore a heavy head-gear, the hair being brushed away from the forehead and surmounted by ribbons and rows of lace, over which was thrown a lace scarf which hung nearly to the waist, giving the general impression of a great mob-cap. "Stiff stays," writes Mr. Dillon, "tightly laced over the stomacher and very long in the waist, became fashionable; and to so great an extent was this pernicious fashion carried that a lady's body from the shoulders to the hip looked like the letter V." There was another fashion among the ladies of building several tiers of lace to a great height upon the hair. These structures, in the prints of the period, have the appearance of enormous combs. As regards the dress of this period, "the general tendency," Mr. Calthrop writes, "was to look Dutch, stiff, prim, but very prosperous."

Costume and furniture have always had a close relationship, and we find Mr. Percy Macquoid writing in his "Age of Walnut": "The settles and chairs of the latter part of the seventeenth century were evidently constructed with a view of forming backgrounds to the prevailing fashions in costume; the strongest characteristic at this time being an extremely high-backed seat to suit the voluminous periwigs and tall head-dresses of the women."

[50]

It will also be noticed that the arms of the chairs were set back from the front of the seat to allow room for the ample skirts of the women.

[Figs. 24, 25, and 26](#) are three chairs of carved walnut with seats covered with figured red velvet. These chairs, from the Old Palace, Richmond, at first glance appear to be of the same pattern, but a closer examination will show that no two are quite alike. Two of them certainly have similar backs, but a difference appears in the legs. In shape there is little difference between these chairs and those of the preceding reign except that the stretcher is lower. The backs, however, differ considerably from the Stuart chairs, the cane having disappeared and its place being taken by pierced and elaborate carvings. [Fig. 27](#) is another and probably a later specimen of a fine William and Mary chair. Although the back is less elaborate, the legs have now assumed the cabriole form and the feet are extremely realistic. The stretcher in the front has, it will be noted, disappeared. These chairs were, of course, made for the wealthy classes, and were comparatively few in number as the fashion was a brief one; but they show the prevailing ideas which in turn expressed themselves on the simpler chairs. An example of the latter is shown in [Fig. 28](#), which, purely as a matter of taste, is possibly as pleasing as some of the more elaborate chairs of this period. This example cost five pounds.

[51]

[Figs. 29 and 31](#) are rush-seated chairs of the Queen Anne period and are made of oak, probably in a country place where the prevailing walnut fashion had not reached. They are exceedingly simple and pleasing in shape and were sold at one pound each. The centre chair ([Fig. 30](#)) is a child's chair of the same period—a type which, in our experience, is not often met with. There is no example in the Victoria and Albert Museum, a fact we mention in case any reader would like to offer such a specimen. Here the splat is slightly different from those of its companions. The present piece lacks a front rail to prevent the child from falling.

Queen Anne chairs of simple character should not be very difficult to obtain, nor should they make extravagant incursions upon the purse. To purchase a number of chairs of identical form sufficient to compose a set is a far more expensive method than to collect more or less odd chairs, singly or in pairs, and to make up a set for oneself. Each may not be exactly similar to the other, but the family likeness is amply sufficient to satisfy any reasonable taste. Indeed such little differences as are expressed, say, in the splats and the legs may be said to break the line of uniformity and to produce an effect which is permanently pleasing and interesting. Such a set of chairs would be admirable in a dining-room; and single chairs of this period and type would be scarcely out of place in any room in the house. Elaborately carved and marquetry chairs of this time are expensive, but it is a question whether the plain chairs are not as pleasing. At present the taste for old furniture runs to pieces which are highly carved and decorated, but this is often for the simple reason that such pieces are more uncommon, and therefore more expensive, than the plain ones. It is possible, however, that in a succeeding age, when all old furniture, both carved and plain, will be rare, that the latter may be as highly favoured as the former. In many of the plain old chairs the lines are charming and the woods rich and interesting, and possessing these, we need scarcely envy those whose means enable them to prefer the richer sorts.

[52]

[53]

We now approach a departure in the designs of furniture which had a far-reaching and lasting effect upon style in England. We refer to the cabriole leg and the shaped foot, which ultimately developed into the claw-and-ball. The first movement appears to have occurred when the straight lines of the Stuart furniture were superseded by the curved lines of the Dutch style; and occasionally we find the cabriole leg on a William and Mary chair, as in [Fig. 27](#).

The cabriole leg has been traced back to China and Egypt, but was introduced into England through Holland and France. It may be called the leading characteristic of the domestic woodwork of the Queen Anne period. It made its appearance on chairs, tables, sofas, and chests—in fact, upon every form of furniture which is lifted from the ground. The word is adopted from the French *cabriole*, a goat-leap, although it must be admitted that this is scarcely a literal description of the form the carving takes. At first the shaping was of the simplest description and showed but the faintest resemblance to the leaping leg of an animal, but later forms took a more realistic turn. The term cabriole has become generic, and is now applied to almost any furniture leg built with a knee. [54]

[Fig. 32](#) is a simple type of Queen Anne chair with cabriole legs, carved with an escallop-shell, a form of decoration which finds its way upon very many forms of furniture of this time, and is as popular as the crown and cherub decoration of the departed Stuarts.

The claw-and-ball foot, which, like the cabriole leg, is traceable to the East, we find on the more elaborate chairs of the Queen Anne period, and is generally accepted to represent the three-toed claw of the Chinese dragon holding the mystic Buddhistic jewel. The development of the claw-and-ball is traceable through the feet of the furniture of this period, and commenced by the base of the chair legs being slightly shaped into a foot, which will be remarked in [Figs. 29](#) and [31](#). Such form is generally known as the club foot.

Then the toe assumed the shape of an animal's foot, out of which a claw was evolved, and, having to clutch something to make a base, a ball was added, and we have the familiar claw-and-ball foot which has remained a favourite decoration to the present time. The good examples are full of spirit and significance, entirely different from the machine-made inanimate examples on modern furniture.

[Figs. 33](#), [34](#), [35](#) are simple examples of Queen Anne chairs. Those with arms should be purchasable for about five guineas and the single chairs for about three guineas. [Fig. 36](#) is an example of an inlaid chair^[3] of this period, the tall graceful back being particularly pleasing. The earlier chairs of this period ([Figs. 33](#) and [35](#)) were provided with strengthening rails between the legs, but later the knee was made stronger and the cross rails dispensed with ([Fig. 34](#)), which had the effect of lightening the appearance of the chair but not of increasing its durability. The disappearance of these leg rails marks the later Queen Anne chairs, so that it is a fair guide as to date of production. Thus disappears the last link with the good old times, when the floors were so dirty that rests were provided for the feet. [55]

[Fig. 37](#), in addition to its cabriole legs and embryo claw-and-ball feet, is especially interesting as foreshadowing the familiar ladder-backed chairs of the Chippendale school. In this chair the rail connecting the back legs has been retained.

In this period the "knee" was either plain or ornamented with an escallop-shell; it rarely had any other form of decoration: but it developed many forms under the influence of Chippendale and his school. It is well to remember, however, that in England the cabriole leg in its original and simpler form belongs to the reign of Queen Anne. [56]

An essential and highly important development is at this period particularly noticeable in the chair, which is now adapted to the human frame instead of, as heretofore, the human frame having to adapt itself to the chair. It is probable that the greater pliability of walnut over oak made this departure feasible, but one has only to sit in the tall straight-backed Stuart chair and the shaped chairs of the Queen Anne reign to see in which direction the advantage in comfort lies. It will be found that in the latter the top of the back is curved so as to fit the nape of the sitter's neck, and that the splat is shaped to suit itself to the back and shoulders. Examples of this shaping are shewn in the chairs, [Figs. 32](#) and [36](#), which also have the simple cabriole legs.

[Figs. 38](#) and [39](#) are arm-chairs of this period. [Fig. 38](#) has a central vase-shaped panel with a volute and leaves on either side. The arms have flattened elbow-rests. [Fig. 39](#) has curiously twisted arms. It has suffered in the splat very much from the worms. In this chair it will be noticed the side rail connecting the legs is missing. The seat is stuffed and covered with canvas, which is decorated with needlework ("petit-point") in coloured wools and silks. [57]

These are arm-chairs for respectable people, but there were also broad-seated arm-chairs at this time known as "drunkards' chairs." The width of the seat in front was nearly three feet, which gave ample room for a man to comfortably collapse.

[Figs. 40](#) and [41](#) are two fine chairs of the late Queen Anne period, showing finely developed cabriole legs and claw-and-ball feet. In both specimens the connecting leg-rails have disappeared and the back feet are shaped. [Fig. 40](#) is covered with gilt and embossed leather over a stuffed back and seat. In [Fig. 41](#) the back has almost lost its Queen Anne character and is merging into what we know as the Chippendale style. The seat of this chair is covered with silk. The Huguenot refugee silk-workers had settled in Spitalfields, and in the reigns of William and Mary and Anne large quantities of silks and velvets were produced, which were frequently used to cover the

chairs of the bedroom furniture of the time. Stuffed and upholstered arm-chairs were also favoured at this period, which was distinctly one for the appreciation of comfort. [Fig. 42](#) is a partly veneered corner or round-about chair of this time; a type of chair largely made in mahogany during the Chippendale period. [58]

The double chair, or settee, remains to be noticed. This, by a process of refinement and elimination, had no doubt been evolved from the old-time settle. It was also called a love-seat, and was constructed in such form as to allow for the pose of social gallantry, simpering, and the plying of the snuff-box and fan, inseparable from the manners of the period. These double seats were usually found in the drawing-rooms of the rich, and simple ones are not as a rule met with. [Fig. 43](#) is a settee of the type of William and Mary; the tied stretchers beneath and the inverted bowl turnery on the legs are characteristic features. [Fig. 44](#) is a fine late Queen Anne specimen with a marquetry back, claw-and-ball feet, and an insistent decoration of the scallop-shell. [Fig. 45](#) is another fine settee of the same period with a full back and claw-and-ball feet. Both these specimens have beautifully shaped arms and feet, and the back feet being also slightly shaped at the base, suggest the latter part of the period.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, tapestries, as forms of wall decoration, had been replaced either by wainscoting or, more generally, by wall-papers. Needlework was a popular occupation amongst the women, who made hangings for their bedsteads and windows and covers for their chairs, stools and couches. Mary, the Queen of William III., set an example as an industrious needlewoman. It was at this time that the gay chintzes and printed cottons, of which so many admirable and inexpensive reproductions can be purchased at the present day, came into vogue. Like so many of the decorative ideas of the time, they were introduced into England by the Dutch, who in their turn borrowed them from the East. They were extremely Oriental in design, depicting trees, birds and flowers, all more or less related to nature. This was, of course, the period when everything Oriental was the fashion,^[4] when Chinese porcelain and red and black lacquer were desired by many and acquired by some; and the gay Oriental chintzes contributed fittingly to the scheme of decoration, as well as affording a protection for the cherished needlework coverings of the furniture. The modern reproductions are no less indispensable in any house in which the old furniture of this period has a place. Some firms print them by hand from the old blocks, and from such firms they should be purchased. Chintzes appear to have been first produced in England by a foreign settlement in Richmond, Surrey, early in the eighteenth century. The English workmen afterwards greatly simplified the designs, and in Queen Anne's time they were largely the fashion. [59]

The Queen Anne home of the middle class would not have startled a visitor from the present century who had elected to inspect it by means of Mr. Wells's Time Machine. Its exterior was square, unpretentious and a trifle heavy, and the interior comfortable and efficiently furnished. In fact, it is at this period that we find the first tangible approach to our own idea of a home. The bathroom was still a luxury even in the great houses, but in most other respects the standard of comfort approached the modern idea. [60]

The first tables made of walnut-wood seem to have followed very much the designs of the Jacobean oaken tables, and have the square sturdy look which we associate with oak furniture. One of the first changes to be noticed is in the appearance, on the legs, of an inverted bowl decoration as in [Fig. 46](#). Then we find a change in the stretchers or bars connecting the legs; these instead of being straight rails between the four corners, now assume the X or tied-stretcher pattern as shown in [Fig. 47](#). This table is inlaid with cedar and boxwood, and is valued at twelve guineas. [Fig. 48](#) is a Museum piece of the same period, the marquetry work on which is very fine—the top being most elaborately inlaid. The inlaid work of this period reached great perfection, blossoms and birds, as well as geometrical designs, being worked out in various woods with great taste and dexterity. It will be noticed that there is a strong family likeness between the two tables, although the latter is a much finer one.^[5] Chinese pottery was (as has been pointed out) the rage at this time, and the flat space in the centre of the tied stretcher was very likely intended to hold a Chinese bowl. [61]

William and Mary tables have turned legs, which were so popular on the furniture of the preceding period but which were soon to disappear in favour of the cabriole leg. In fact, the tables in a few years underwent a great transformation, as will be seen in the next example, [Fig. 49](#). [62]

The Queen Anne period was a drinking, gambling, duelling, dice-throwing age. In fact, it is said that loaded dice could be purchased at the toy shops in Fleet Street. The spirit of speculation was about. The nation had accumulated wealth a trifle too quickly, and trustee securities, as we now understand them, had small attraction for any one. Every one wanted to grow rich at once. The wildest schemes were launched. These culminated in 1720 in the South Sea Bubble. Companies, as is well known, were formed with the most extraordinary objects, such as "for the invention of melting down sawdust and chips and casting them into clean deal boards without cracks or flaws"; "for the importing of a number of large jackasses from Spain"; and "for an undertaking which shall in due time be revealed." All classes were affected; and the Prince of Wales became governor of a copper company which had an unfortunate end.

The gambling spirit was continued in private, and to this fact we probably owe the existence of the many interesting card-tables of the late Queen Anne period. These were, of course, only found in the houses of the richer classes, and are often beautiful pieces of furniture. [63]

Table legs developed similarly to chair legs. The ubiquitous cabriole, which has already been dealt with at length, was applied generally to tables, with, later, the scallop-shell decoration and the claw-and-ball foot. The fine example, [Fig. 49](#), possesses all these decorations, together with a pendant under the shell. This specimen was purchased by the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1904 for the sum of twelve pounds, which figure has, of course, little relation to its present value. These tables are generally built with a flap and covered with cloth, except at the four corners, where round or square places are left to take candlesticks or glasses; cups are also shaped in the tables to hold money, and they are sometimes provided with secret drawers. We have read extraordinary stories of great sums being discovered in these drawers—the proceeds of a night when "the old home was gambled away"; but personally we have not chanced on such a find.

Tables with two flaps were also used as breakfast-and small dining-tables. They were generally oval, but sometimes round, and occasionally square. These types were repeated later in mahogany with added decorative details, and later still Sheraton adopted the folding-table, converting it to his own style. [64]

Tables in great variety were made in this period, but the heavy type of table of the previous century went out with the banqueting-hall and has never returned. The gate-leg table, which originated in the oaken period, is dealt with in Volume I.; and no doubt in many parts of the country it continued to be made in oak, but it does not appear ever to have become popular in walnut, which, after all, was never a wood in general use in country districts. Fashion has a strong controlling influence over furniture, as it has over so many other matters of taste. The table with cabriole legs came into fashion, and immediately cabriole legs in some form or other became *de rigueur*. The slender-legged gate-leg table did not offer sufficient opportunity to the wood-carver, and was also rather unsuitable for card-playing. Its perfect plainness, moreover, was not to the taste of an age which inclined towards richness and colour in its household surroundings.

CHAPTER V: CHESTS OF DRAWERS, TALLBOYS, CABINETS AND CHINA CABINETS

In Volume I., dealing with the oak period, we traced the evolution of the chest of drawers from the simple chest or coffer, first by the addition of an under-drawer to the coffer; then, the main body of the chest being subdivided into convenient drawers (with the consequent disappearance of the lid), we had the primitive form of the chest of drawers, the term "chest" still clinging—apparently for all time—to the structure. [65]

The earlier chests of drawers, dating from about the middle of the seventeenth century, were comparatively small, usually with raised panels or mouldings; occasionally we find them with decorations of simple carved scroll-work and guilloche banding. The prolongation of the stiles to form feet, as in the simple chest, had disappeared in favour of bracketed corners or ball feet, as in [Figs. 50](#) and [51](#).

[Fig. 50](#) represents an interesting chest of drawers, simple in outline but elaborately decorated. The top is inlaid *en parterre* with four corner scroll designs and a centre design of birds, flowers, and fruit, in ebony and laburnum wood on a ground of holly. A delicately cut laurel-leaf band of inlay (shaded with hot sand) frames the top, sides, and drawer fronts. It belongs approximately to about 1680. The dimensions are fairly typical for the period, being 36 in. high, 39 in. wide, and 23 in. deep. [66]

[Fig. 51](#) is of rather unusual form, having three large drawers in the upper portion and one long drawer under, which is capped by a bold moulding. The oblong panel decorations consist of marquetry designs of conventional flowers in ebony, holly, rose, and laburnum woods. This also belongs to the year 1680; 41 in. high, 40 in. wide, and 23 in. deep. It has a value of about eighteen guineas.

Marquetry began to come into favour in this country about 1675-1680. We quote Mr. Pollen, who says: "At first the chief motives in design appear to have been acanthus leaves, figures, and arabesques, under Italian and French influence: a little later, designs of flowers and birds, treated in a more realistic fashion, were introduced by the Dutch. Finally, about 1700, these two styles passed into an English style of very delicate leaf-work of conventional form, often intricately mingled with scrolls and strap-work; and geometrical designs were used." Mr. Macquoid remarks that "investigation proves that, compared with the English manufacture, Dutch marquetry is always duller in colour and more disconnected in design." [67]

Late in the seventeenth and early in the eighteenth centuries we find the chests of drawers raised on twisted or turned legs, which are fixed to a shallow plinth or joined near the ground by shaped stretchers. For the first-named type we refer readers to [Fig. 52](#), a specimen at the Victoria and Albert Museum. It is built of pinewood overlaid with lignum vitæ, sycamore and walnut, in small roundish pieces cut across the grain. The top is further decorated with sycamore bands arranged in two concentric circles in the centre, surrounded by intersecting segments. In the corners are quadrants. Each side has a large circle of similar materials. The structure is 3 ft. 8 in. high and 3 ft. 4 in. wide. It cost the museum £10 in 1898.

[Fig. 53](#), another dwarf chest of drawers of the same period, also at the museum, is of oak and pine veneered with various woods. This is an excellent example illustrating the amount of labour

expended by the craftsmen of the day on the early examples of veneering. On the face of the top drawer alone there are no less than twenty large and thirty-three small pieces of veneer, exclusive of the bordering. The feet are very unusual, having a curiously booted appearance, with the soles clearly indicated. This and the previous example bear the brass drop handles and fretted escutcheons of the period. Great variety is displayed in these brass fittings. The handles more often are of elongated pear shape, but occasionally resemble a flattened flower-bud. The ring handles appeared somewhat later. [68]

As types of the chests of drawers on legs we give two illustrations. [Fig. 54](#), from a photograph supplied by Messrs. Hampton and Sons Ltd., Pall Mall, represents a fine specimen of veneered work of the William and Mary period. The figuring in the walnut veneer is very good and finely matched. The stand is tall, with but one long shallow drawer. The turned legs are particularly graceful in outline. It will be noticed that the inverted cup detail is repeated in the china cabinet ([Fig. 69](#)), amongst the illustrations of lacquered furniture.

[Fig. 55](#) possesses twisted legs, a survival of the Stuart period proper. During the reign of William and Mary and that of Anne, we are, strictly, still in the Stuart period—the two queens being wholly and William half Stuart. With the abdication of James II. there was a change in the temper of the people and a comparatively abrupt change in the furniture. In the chest under discussion the upper portion is severely plain, whilst the lower half or stand is of particularly graceful outline. We see how the stand is gradually being brought into requisition, not only as a stand, but to hold extra drawers—quite small drawers at first. The lifting of the central arch and consequent shallowing of the corresponding small drawer give a pleasing diversity of line. This structure is scarcely a "tallboy," being rather a chest of drawers on a stand; and the stand, more than anything (as in the previous illustration), points to the reign of William and Mary. This piece is in the possession of Mr. F. W. Phillips, of the Manor House, Hitchin. The owner values it at ten guineas. [69]

Something more nearly approaching the genuine "tallboy" is shown in the coloured frontispiece. Here we have the stand growing deeper and containing five small drawers. The angular-kneed cabriole legs denote the period—about 1710, the middle of Queen Anne's reign. The veneer is of richly figured walnut banded with herring-bone inlay. It is furnished with brass handles and engraved escutcheons.

We begin to see how increasing wealth in clothes called for more commodious furniture. This piece has six drawers in the upper carcass in addition to the five small ones in the stand: altogether a very considerable storage capacity as compared with the dumpy chests of drawers of earlier make. [70]

By easy stages we arrive at the tallboy pure and simple, sometimes called "double chest" or "chest on chest." The term "tall" is obvious, but "boy" is not so clear.

The tallboy was purely the outcome of a demand for something more commodious than the early form. It was made in two sections, mainly for convenience in moving, and partly, by breaking up the lines, to lighten the appearance of what would otherwise be a somewhat ungainly structure. There is scarcely room for much variation in form, and the tallboys of the Queen Anne and early Georgian period are very much of one family. [Fig. 56](#) is of walnut-wood bordered with a herring-bone banding of yew-wood. A lightness is given to the upper portion by the corners being canted and fluted. The oval ring plates are a pleasing feature. This double chest of nine drawers stands 69 in. high. A well-preserved specimen of this calibre would have a value of from ten to fifteen guineas.

[Fig. 57](#) is a less pretentious tallboy chest of six drawers, valued at ten guineas, in the possession of Mr. J. H. Springett, of High Street, Rochester. Like the majority of these old veneered walnut chests, the drawer fronts and sides of the main structure are veneered on pine, whilst the bodies of the drawers are of oak. The fretted escutcheons and cusped handles (unfortunately not quite uniform) are exceptionally good. There is interesting documentary evidence connected with this old piece of furniture. Pasted on the back of the bottom drawer is the maker's label, yellow with age. At the top of the label are engraved designs of an elaborate cabinet and four coffins; underneath is printed the following legend: [71]

"John Knowles Cabinet Maker and Sworn Appraiser, at the Cabinet and four Coffins in Tooley Street Southwark maketh and selleth all sorts of Cabinets and joiners goods, Viz Cabinets scrutores, desk and book cases, bewrowes, chests of draws and all sorts of tables as wallnut tree mehogny, wainscot and Japan'd. All sorts of corner Cubbords looking glasses and sconces and all other joiner's goods made and sold both wholesale and retail at reasonable rates. Likewise funerals decently furnished."

We have not been able to unearth any other record of John Knowles. His name does not appear in the first edition of the London Directory, a very small volume published in 1731, nor in any subsequent edition up to 1771. The style of printing and archaic spelling, however, would point to a date fairly early in the eighteenth century, probably during the reign of George I. The mention of "mehogny" practically precludes an earlier date than 1715-20. [72]

In the earlier days—away back in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries—the wardrobe was a special room, fitted with closets set apart for the storage of clothes. All through Tudor times the coffer was in use, and was all-sufficient to hold the clothes and household linen. We find in Jacobean times the coffer growing into the chest of drawers, and, in addition, tall hanging-

cupboards were coming into use. But it is not till the reign of Queen Anne—the walnut period—that we find the prototype of the present-day wardrobe, with its roomy drawers, hanging-cupboards, and numerous shelves.

The inspiration of this eminently useful article came from Holland. It is made usually of oak and pine veneered with walnut and, as often as not, inlaid with marquetry. The upper storey consists of small drawers and shelves enclosed by two doors and surmounted by a curved cornice, the lower portion being a chest of three or four long drawers.

Even the admittedly English-made specimens are so extremely Dutch in appearance, that it is probable the majority were designed and made by the Dutchmen who came over in the train of William III. We give an example in [Fig. 58](#) of an inlaid hanging-press or wardrobe, showing decidedly Dutch influence in the lower portion, particularly noticeable in the protruding knees set at an angle of forty-five degrees. The marquetry designs of vases and flowers are also of Dutch type. It is of average size, being 91 in. high, 66 in. wide, and 22 in. deep. As with the other furniture of the walnut period, the early wardrobes were extremely solid and dignified in appearance. The modern maker has made improvements as to interior fittings, but on general principles the old pieces leave little or nothing to be desired. The old-time craftsman was conscientious in his work. We do not find the doors flying open unasked; the drawers have no nasty habits of refusing to open or close. The Queen Anne or early Georgian wardrobe, which is sound to-day, bids fair to outlive our great-grandchildren, and should be cheap at its average selling-price—say, twenty to thirty pounds. [73]

The china cabinet came in with the craze for Oriental porcelain. We shall have more to say upon this subject in the chapter on lacquer. Fulham stoneware, Bristol and Lambeth "Delft" and other early English "Clome" had no claim on cabinet space. The more pretentious pieces, when not in actual use, adorned the court cupboard and sideboard cheek by jowl with the family silver or pewter. In the main, all pottery was for use rather than ornament until the blue-and-white and *famille verte* arrived from China, and we shall scarcely find a glazed china cabinet earlier than the Orange accession. Many of the William and Anne bureaux were surmounted by cabinets, the doors glazed with panes of glass set in designs consisting of small squares or oblongs with larger hexagonals or octagonals. This form was used either as a bookcase or a china cabinet. Unglazed corner cupboards, often bow-fronted and lacquered, made to hang in the angle of the wall, were for storage, rather than display, of china. Another variety of corner cupboard made to stand on the floor has a glazed upper storey. These belong to the varieties of furniture used by the middle classes, whilst the cabinet of the china collector would be an imposing structure of more elegant design surmounted on legs joined by shaped stretchers. We give an example in the chapter on lacquer. [74]

[Fig. 59](#) is an example of a china cabinet in marquetry work, with scrolled cornice, two glazed doors, two cupboards, bracketed base, and shaped under-framing. This piece has a value of about £30. [75]

The walnut period is rich in cabinets, which were used for the storage of papers and valuables—structures quite distinct from the writing-desks of the period. Some types will be found in the illustrations to the chapter on lacquered furniture. It must be borne in mind that the lacquering was often but an afterthought decoration. Scrape away the pseudo-Chinese decoration and we shall probably find the beautiful old walnut veneer.

CHAPTER VI: SECRETAIRES, BUREAUX, AND WRITING-TABLES

One would naturally suppose that the writing-desk is as old as the art of writing. So far as this country is concerned, the writing-desk of a sort was known in very early times. In the art library of the Victoria and Albert Museum are illuminated MSS. of about 1440-1450 showing scribes working at sloping desks of simple construction. Coming to Elizabethan and early Jacobean times, we find desks of small dimensions mounted on table-stands, but it is fairly certain that the ordinary tables of the house were more often used for writing purposes. The composite article—secretaire, escritoire, or bureau (interchangeable terms)—for writing and storage of writing materials is the product of the end of the seventeenth century. The connection between the writer or secretary (*secretus*, early Latin; *secretarius*, late Latin) and his desk, the secretaire, is obvious. Escritoire is but another form of the word; sometimes scrutoire or scrutoire in corrupt English. Bureau in the French was originally a russet cloth which covered the desk (from the Latin *burrus*, red), but came to mean the desk itself, and also the office in which the business was transacted. [76]

We look back upon the Elizabethan times as the Renaissance period of English literature, but even then the lettered were in the minority. By the end of the seventeenth century literature had spread to the middle classes, and we find the Press pouring out countless ponderous volumes on every imaginable subject. It is the age of the diarists, conspicuous amongst whom were Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, whose gossipy daily journals bring us so intimately in touch with the political and social life of the times. It is the age of the pamphleteers and essayists whose effusions led up to the semi-satirical periodicals of the early eighteenth century—chief amongst them being the *Spectator*, started by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele in 1710. [77]

This vast outpouring of literature called for more commodious writing-desks, and the *escritoire* or bureau is the natural result. Like the other furniture of the period, the desks were solid and dignified. In the main they were severe in outline, but generally reflected the prevailing architecture of the period, which was derived from the Italian Renaissance. We find the desks often surmounted by finely moulded, boldly carved cornices and broken pediments. As the Dutch influence grew we find the lower portions, containing commodious long drawers, with rounded or *bombè* fronts.

[78]

The principal wood used was walnut, sometimes solid and sometimes veneered on oak and pine. We also find the same schemes in marquetry work, as in the chests of drawers, cabinets, and clock-cases showing Continental influences.

[Fig. 60](#) represents a William and Mary period bureau of simple outline surmounted by a panelled cupboard with bookshelves. The raised panels are of the late Jacobean type. It is built of solid walnut, oak and limewood. Behind the visible stationery cases are concealed a number of secret recesses; the two pillars flanking the small central cupboard are the fronts of two narrow upright sliding receptacles; on removing these, springs are released which secure inner secret drawers. This bureau, valued at sixteen guineas, is in the possession of Mr. J. H. Springett, of Rochester.

[Fig. 61](#), dating from early eighteenth century, is a bureau with four serpentine drawers below decorated with sprigs of flowers. It stands on depressed ball feet much like "China oranges." The knees set at an angle denote the Dutch influence, if it were not actually made in Holland. The piece, standing 43 in. high and 40 in. wide, is valued at eighteen guineas.

[79]

[Fig. 62](#), a walnut-wood small bureau with sloping lid and knee-hole recess, belongs to Queen Anne's reign. Beneath the lid are numerous useful small drawers and stationery cases. It bears the charming original brass drop handles in form of flattened flower-buds. This type was very popular all through the eighteenth century. In general outline it is of the pattern adopted by modern makers of small bureaux.

[Fig. 63](#) represents a charming type of Queen Anne period pedestal writing-table with knee-hole recess. It is a beautiful example of figured walnut veneered on oak; all the drawers are oak-lined. It was recently purchased in London for ten pounds. The knee-hole writing table—of which the present is an example—is a type of Queen Anne furniture of the greatest utility. It has many drawers as well as a cupboard underneath, and, for its size, may be said to represent the maximum of usefulness. Whilst seated at it you may be said to have the whole of its resources to your hand, which can scarcely be said of the bureau, as, when the writing-flap falls, it is difficult to get to the drawers beneath. The Queen Anne knee-hole table is becoming rarer, and the writers would certainly recommend its purchase should opportunity arise. Its pleasing lines and frequently beautiful arrangement of veneers make it a desirable addition to almost any room. Its dimensions are slender, usually measuring at the top about 30 by 21 ins.

[80]

[Fig. 64](#) represents a still simpler form of Queen Anne writing-table on solid walnut cabriole legs. The drawer fronts and top are veneered and inlaid with simple bands. This specimen has a value of about £5. The photograph was supplied by Mr. Springett, of Rochester. This form of table and the one previously illustrated are sometimes described as dressing-tables. They were probably used for both purposes, and they certainly lend themselves to either use.

One of the most useful forms of the *escritoire*, or bureau, is of the type given in [Figs. 65](#) and [66](#). It was bought recently in Mid-Somerset at a cost of thirty pounds. This type is made in two sections, sometimes with bracketed feet and sometimes with ball feet. The bureau under consideration is of an average size, being 5 ft. 3 in. high, 3 ft. 7 in. wide, and 19 in. deep. It is of rectangular form and the falling front, which serves as a writing-table, is supported by jointed steel rods. The opened front discloses an assemblage of drawers and pigeon-holes. The pigeon-holes at the top pull out in four sections, and behind are hidden numerous small drawers. Other secret drawers are so ingeniously contrived that they can only be discovered on pulling out the visible drawers and the dividing pieces on which the drawers run. The middle member of the cornice details forms the front of a shallow drawer running the whole length and depth of the bureau top. This bureau, which contains in all about thirty drawers and recesses, is built of red deal overlaid with thick veneers of walnut and fine knotted pollard oak of dark hue, with cross-banded edges of walnut in various shades. The visible drawers are of oak throughout, whilst the hidden ones are oak-bodied with red deal fronts to match the lining of the main structure—thus ingeniously disguising their presence.

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We have seen specimens of the same type entirely veneered with walnut and others inlaid with marquetry. These bureaux, dating from about 1690 well into Queen Anne's reign, have selling values of from £25 to £35.

There must be an added sentimental pleasure in sitting at an *escritoire* which was possibly the treasured possession of a pamphleteer or diarist of the last years of the rebellion: an æsthetic joy in rummaging amongst the secret drawers which contained the journals in cypher of the wire-pullers of the new monarchy.

CHAPTER VII: CLOCKS AND CLOCK-CASES

A learned dissertation on clocks and the theory of time would be out of place in a volume of this description, and anything we have to say concerning the clocks of the "walnut period" will, of

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necessity, be of a popular nature. In England the chamber clocks, as distinguished from the costly and elaborate timepieces which adorned public buildings, appear to have been introduced about the year 1600.^[6] The type is fairly familiar, and is known as the "lantern," "bird-cage," or "bedpost." Amongst dealers such clocks are usually styled "lantern" or "Cromwell." They usually stood on a wall-bracket, but sometimes were suspended from a nail. The clocks are built of brass surmounted by a bell, sometimes used for striking the hours and sometimes only for an alarm. The clocks were often housed in hooded oak cases, which protected them from the dust. These original cases are sometimes met with and are interesting in themselves, but the brass clocks are more ornamental when minus the cases. These clocks were made to run for thirty hours, the motive power being a heavy weight with a cord or chain. At first the vertical verge movement was used, but about 1658 the pendulum was introduced. The alternate bobbing in and out of the short pendulum through slits in either side of the clock accounts for the term "bob" pendulum. It has been noticed that the doors of these early clocks were often constructed from old sundial plates, the engraved figures of the sundial still showing on the insides. Doubtless the sundial makers, finding their trade falling off, used the materials in hand for the new-fangled clocks. The dial-plate of the early lantern clock is circular, with a band of metal (sometimes silvered) for the numerals, which at first were rather short. About 1640 the hour-hands were made wider and the numerals longer. After about 1660, we find the circular dial growing larger in relation to the body of the clock and protruding slightly on either side. During the latter years of Queen Anne's reign the dial-plates often protruded as much as two or three inches on either side. This did not improve the general appearance. Clocks of this pattern are known as the "sheep's head." With such slight variations the lantern clock was made from Elizabeth's to George III.'s reigns. The late ones, probably made by provincial clock-makers, have square dials with arched tops.

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The tops of the square cases of the lantern clocks are often surrounded by fretted galleries. As a rule the four fretted pieces are all of one pattern, but generally the front one only is engraved. A favourite form of fret is that in which the crossed dolphins appear; this pattern came in between 1660 and 1670. These lantern clocks with ornamental galleries are furnished with bells as wide as the clock-case suspended from two intersecting arched bands stretching from corner to corner. They are finished off by the addition of a turned pinnacle at each corner and a fifth one on the apex of the bell. Such clocks were apparently not intended to be covered by an outer wooden case. They would not be greatly harmed by dust, as they contain no delicate mechanism.

These old-world lantern clocks were practically indestructible, and until a few years ago they could be found in plenty in the old farm-houses, and would fetch but a pound or two at auction. Of recent years, with the growth of the collecting habit, the dealers have found a ready market, and to-day a well-made lantern clock in original condition has an appreciable value of from five to ten pounds. They have but a single hand, like the old clock on Westminster Abbey, and consequently to tell the exact time of day is a matter of guess-work, as only the quarters are marked. To tell the time within a quarter of an hour would have been sufficient for the original owners, who had no trains to catch. The usual process to-day is to substitute a modern eight-day "fuzee" movement for the old thirty-hour "verge." Thus, by eliminating the chain and weight, the clock is adapted for a place on the mantelshelf. From a decorative point of view it is difficult to conceive anything more charming as a finish to a "walnut period" room.

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[Fig. 67](#) is a "bird-cage" clock at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The dial, which is very nicely engraved with a flower design, is signed "Andrew Prime Londini Fecit." It has dolphin-pattern frets on three sides. The side frets are engraved to match the front one. This clock cost the museum £4 4s. in 1892. Andrew Prime was admitted to the Clock-makers' Company in 1647, and we shall be within the mark in assuming that the clock was made some time between that date and 1680. The dolphin decoration would, indeed, point to a date not earlier than 1660, and, furthermore, the length of the pendulum would suggest not earlier than 1675.

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In [Fig. 68](#) we give an illustration of a small lantern clock by Anthony Marsh, of London, with its original hooded oak case.

[Fig. 69](#) is the same clock shown without the hood. This subject was kindly lent for illustration by Mr. Whittaker, of 46 Wilton Road, London, S.W., one of the comparatively few remaining clock-makers following the old-time traditions. A talk with Mr. Whittaker in his workshop takes us back to the old days of individual work at the lathe and bench, when each clock-maker was an artist with ideas of his own—a clock-maker in every sense of the word, making his own parts by hand instead of, as in these days, buying them by the gross from the factory.

Anthony Marsh, the maker of the clock illustrated, was a member of the Clock-makers' Company in 1724, and worked "at ye dial opposite Bank of England." Marsh is a well-known name amongst the clock-making fraternity, no less than fifteen of the name following the trade between 1691 and 1842.

Contemporary with the lantern clocks of the middle period (about 1660) we find the "bracket" or "pedestal" clocks enclosed by wooden cases, as distinguished from the brass-cased chamber clocks. The earlier patterns had flat tops with brass handles for carrying. Sometimes they were surmounted by perforated metal domes, resembling inverted baskets, to which the handles were fixed. As time went on the tops of the clock-cases were made more dome-shaped and the baskets and handles were elaborately chased. The cases, often of exquisite workmanship, were generally constructed of oak or ebony, and as timepieces these clocks, by skilled makers, were far superior to the generality of lantern clocks of the country-side. We associate these bracket-clocks with such names as Tompion, Graham, and Quare.

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Thomas Tompion, "the father of English watchmaking," was born at Northill, in Bedfordshire, in 1638, and died in London in 1713. He was the leading watchmaker at the Court of Charles II. George Graham, Tompion's favourite pupil, was born in Cumberland in 1673, and died in London in 1751. He was known as "Honest George Graham," and was probably the most accomplished British horologist of his own or any age. He was admitted a freeman of the Clock-makers' Company on completion of his apprenticeship in 1695, when he entered the service of Tompion. A lifelong friendship was only severed by the death of Tompion in 1713. Graham was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1720, and made a member of the Society's council in 1732. Even today Graham's "dead-beat escapement" is used in most pendulum clocks constructed for really accurate time-keeping. The site of Graham's shop in Fleet Street is now occupied by the offices of *The Sporting Life*. Tompion and Graham lie in one grave in the nave of Westminster Abbey, near the grave of David Livingstone. Daniel Quare, a contemporary maker of first rank, was born in 1648 and died in 1734. He was Clock-maker to William III. There is a fine example of a tall clock by Quare at Hampton Court Palace. Quare was the inventor of the repeating watch.

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[Fig. 70](#) is a bracket clock in marquetry case made by John Martin, of London, in the seventeenth century. It is fitted with "rack striking work" invented by Edward Barlow (born 1636, died 1716). It will be noticed that the corners of the dial-plate are ornamented with the winged cherubs' heads which we find so often in the scheme of decoration of Sir Christopher Wren's churches. This clock, lent by Lieut.-Col. G. B. C. Lyons, may be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The "bracket" clocks were the favourite household timepieces before the introduction of the long-cased or grandfather clocks, which came in some time between 1660 and 1670. The earliest long-cased clocks were furnished with the "bob" pendulum. The long or "royal" pendulum was introduced about 1676. The "bob" pendulum clock-cases were very narrow—just wide enough to comfortably accommodate the chain and weights, the primal idea of the case being merely to hide the chains and weights. The wide swing of the long pendulum necessitated more room in the case, and examples are found with added wings, showing that long pendulums have been added to the old movements.

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As with the lantern clocks, the early long clocks had thirty-hour movements; but the great makers, such as Tompion, Graham, and Quare, constructed clocks to run for eight days, a month, three months, and even a year. The introduction of the eight-day movement appears to have been coincident with the long pendulum.

The cases of the grandfather clocks, in the main, harmonised with the other furniture of the period. The majority of them were built of oak, and those of country make were generally plain. Many were veneered with walnut, and others (more rarely) with ebony. With the advent of William III. came the taste for marquetry work, and the long-cased clocks received their due share of this form of ornamentation. The fronts were often pierced with an oval or circular hole filled with greenish bull's-eye glass, through which the swinging pendulum bob could be seen. About 1710 the taste for marquetry began to wane. The lacquering craze was at its height. Clock-cases were sent out to China to receive treatment at the hands of the Chinese lacquerers. It was a lengthy and expensive process: it probably would take a year or so with the slow travelling and slow drying of the various coats of lacquer. We show, in the chapter on lacquered furniture, how the growing demand was met by the English and Dutch lacquerers, who adopted less expensive and more expeditious, if less satisfactory, methods.

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It is in the nature of things that the old long-cased clocks were gently treated, and, consequently, genuine old specimens are still fairly plentiful. Old thirty-hour clocks in plain oak cases with painted dials may still be bought for four or five pounds apiece, whilst reliable eight-day clocks of fair make will fetch anything from five to ten pounds. We cannot expect to get a Tompion or Graham clock for anything like these prices. We had the opportunity five years ago of buying a magnificent Graham clock in a mahogany case of fine proportions for £20. It was the chance of a lifetime, and—the chance was missed.

The three illustrations we give ([Figs. 71](#), [72](#), and [73](#)) represent fine examples of marquetry-decorated clocks at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The simple naturalesque style of marquetry, showing direct Dutch influence, is shown in [Fig. 71](#). The carnations are exceedingly lifelike. The dial-plate of this clock, which is still in good going order, bears the inscription "Mansell Bennett at Charing Cross." It was probably made about 1690. [Figs. 72](#) and [73](#) represent the more typically English style of delicate geometrical marquetry work, dating from about 1700. In both of these clocks the fretted bands of wood beneath the cornices, as well as the nature of the marquetry, would point to a later period than that of the Mansell Bennett clock. They belong to the Queen Anne period. [Fig. 72](#) was made by Henry Poisson, who worked in London from 1695 to 1720. [Fig. 73](#), unfortunately a clock-case only, has the original green bull's-eye glass in the door.

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A word of warning may be in place in regard to grandfather clocks with carved oak cases. Such things purporting to be "200 years old" are often advertised for sale, but are scarcely likely to be genuine. Speaking for ourselves, we have never seen one which bore the impress of genuineness. We must bear in mind that at the date of the introduction of the long case—say 1660-1670—the practice of carving furniture was rapidly on the wane, and by the end of the century had practically ceased. In this connection we quote that great authority on old clocks, Mr. F. J. Britten, who says: "Dark oak cases carved in high relief do not seem to have been the fashion of any particular period, but the result rather of occasional efforts by enthusiastic artists in wood, and then in most instances they appear to have been made to enclose existing clocks in substitution of inferior or worn-out coverings."

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In regard to the wonderful time-keeping qualities of old grandfather clocks, Mr. H. H. Cunyngham, in his useful little book, "Time and Clocks," expresses the opinion that the secret lies in the length of the pendulum. "This," he writes, "renders it possible to have but a small arc of oscillation, and therefore the motion is kept very nearly harmonious. For practical purposes nothing will even now beat these old clocks, of which one should be in every house. At present the tendency is to abolish them and substitute American clocks with very short pendulums, which never can keep good time. They are made of stamped metal and, when they get out of order, no one thinks of having them mended. They are thrown into the ashpit and a new one bought. In reality this is not economy."

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Mr. Cunyngham's remarks point the moral as to the economy of the long clock. But we should say, more strictly speaking, that German and Austrian wall and bracket clocks have to a large extent taken the place of the old English long-cased clocks. The shortness of the pendulum is not of necessity the weak point. The bracket clocks of the best English makers since the seventeenth century, with short pendulums, have been noted for their reliability as timekeepers. Efficiency from a badly constructed clock, be it American, German or English, can scarcely be expected.

As we have already suggested, fine clocks by the great masters are now beyond the means of the modest collector; but serviceable and decorative grandfather clocks of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are still obtainable at moderate prices. In many cases the dials show great taste in the art of engraving. We must bear in mind that the majority of these clocks—particularly those with the painted dials and plain oak cases—were the joint productions of the country clock-maker and the country joiner, and numbers of them have the very smallest pretensions to correctness of design. We find clock-cases which have the appearance of being "all plinth"; others are too long or too short or too wide in the body; others are overweighted in the head; and, again, others are too shallow and have an unhappy appearance of being flattened out against the wall. The old oak clock-case of perfect proportions is comparatively rare. The collector must studiously avoid any clock-case which is "obviously out of drawing," and in the main his eye will guide him in the selection. We are indebted to Mr. Stuart Parker, an experienced amateur collector of clocks, for a carefully thought-out opinion as to the ideal dimensions of a clock-case.

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Supposing a full-sized clock-case 7 ft. 6 in. high: the three main sections should measure as follows:

The plinth: 2 ft. high and 1 ft. 10 in. wide.

The body: 3 ft. high and 1 ft. 4½ in. wide.

The head: 2 ft. 6 in. high and 1 ft. 10 in. wide.

The width is taken at the middle of each of the three sections. The base of the plinth and the cornices of the head section should each measure 2 ft. 1 in. in width.

CHAPTER VIII: LACQUERED FURNITURE

English lacquered furniture "in the Oriental taste" belongs to the last quarter of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries. It is not surprising that when the rage for everything Chinese and Japanese—at the time indiscriminately called "Indian"—was prevalent, a school of Anglo-Oriental craftsmen should have sprung up. The taste was at its height about 1710, and continued for many years.

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The art of lacquering is said by the Japanese themselves to have been practised in Japan as early as the third century, when the Empress Jingo conquered Corea. In the ninth century the Kioto artists inlaid their lacquer with mother-of-pearl. In the fifteenth century landscape decorations were used, and by the end of the seventeenth century the art had reached its zenith. The material used in Japan is resin-lac, an exudation from the lacquer-tree (*Rhus vernicifera*). Without going into the details of the art, it is well to bear in mind that the brilliant surface of Japanese lacquer is not obtained by varnishing, but by the actual polishing of the lacquer itself. It is treated as a solid body, built up stage by stage and polished at every stage. For an exposition of the art one cannot do better than read Mr. Marcus B. Huish's chapter on lacquer in "Japan and Its Art."

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It was probably not till late Tudor times that any specimens of Japanese or Chinese lacquer found their way to this country, and then principally in the shape of small cups, bowls, and trays. "Indian Cabinets" are mentioned occasionally in inventories at the end of Elizabeth's reign, and in the household accounts of Charles II. there is an item of £100 for "two Jappan Cabinets."

The English and Portuguese traded with Japan in Elizabeth's reign, but were expelled in 1637. The Dutch were more tenacious, and from the commencement of their trading operations with Japan, in 1600, managed, at intervals, to keep in touch with their new market. Even the Dutch were regarded unfavourably by the Japanese authorities, and traded under considerable disabilities. The majority of the lacquered ware which came to England filtered through Holland. It was brought to Europe round the Cape in the armed Dutch merchantmen which, at the same time, were bringing home the beautiful old Imari vases and dishes with *kinrande* (brocade) decorations, which served later on as the models for the early Crown Derby "Old Japan" wares and the simple Kakiyemon specimens copied at Chelsea, Bow, and Dresden. One of these old ships, the *Middleburg*, trading from the China Seas, homeward bound and laden with bullion and

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curios, went down in Soldanha Bay, off the South African coast, on October 18, 1714. In August 1907 the divers salvaged some of the cargo. Needless to say, the "Japann Cabinets" had long since perished, but the little Chinese blue-and-white cups and saucers came to the surface none the worse for nearly two hundred years' immersion in salt water.

We are fortunate in still possessing at Hampton Court Palace a goodly number of Kakiyemon hexagonal covered jars and bottle-shaped vases, and tall cylindrical Chinese blue-and-white vases of the Khang Hi reign, placed there by William and Mary; but the scarcity of contemporary English furniture there is deplorable. The real beauty of old Oriental porcelain is never so apparent as when displayed on the old "Japann Cabinets" or the sombre furniture of the Orange-Nassau dynasty.

It was fashionable to decry the craze for things Chinese, and early eighteenth-century literature teems with gibes at the china maniacs of the day. We have referred in the first chapter of the volume to Macaulay's small opinion of the merits of old Chinese porcelain. The *Spectator* for February 12, 1712, contains a letter from an imaginary Jack Anvil who had made a fortune, married a lady of quality, and grown into Sir John Enville. He tells how my Lady Mary Enville "next set herself to reform every room in my house, having glazed all my chimney-pieces with looking glasses, and planted every corner with such heaps of China, that I am obliged to move about my own house with the greatest caution and circumspection for fear of hurting some of our brittle furniture."

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Daniel Defoe, in his "Tour of Great Britain," says: "The Queen (Mary) brought in the custom or humour, as I may call it, of furnishing houses with China ware which increased to a strange degree afterwards, piling their China upon the tops of Cabinets, scrutores and every Chymney Piece to the top of the ceilings and even setting up shelves for their China ware where they wanted such places, till it became a grivance in the expence of it and even injurious to their Families and Estates."

At Hampton Court to-day we can see the chimney-pieces in the corners of the smaller closets with the tiers of diminishing shelves reaching almost to the ceilings, and displayed thereon are the "flymy little bits of Blue" which Mr. Henley laughs at in his *Villanelle*. Perhaps some day our National Museum will overflow and refurnish Hampton Court Palace, which to-day in its furnishing, apart from the pictures and tapestries, is but a shadow of its old self.

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Although germane to the matter, the foregoing is somewhat in the nature of a digression from the subject of the "japanned" furniture, which took such a hold of the popular fancy that the making of such things was practised as a hobby by the amateurs of the period. "A Treatise on Japanning and Varnishing" was issued by John Stalker in 1688, and, just as "painting and the use of the backboard" were essentials in the curriculum of the early Victorian seminary, so were the young ladies of the reign of William III. taught the gentle art of "Japanning." In the Verney Memoirs we find Edmund Verney, son of Sir John Verney, the Squire of East Claydon, writing to his little daughter Molly (aged about eight years) in 1682 or 1683, at Mrs. Priest's school at Great Chelsey: "I find you have a desire to learn to Japann, as you call it, and I approve of it, and so I shall of anything that is Good and Virtuous, Therefore learn in God's name all Good Things, and I will willingly be at the Charge so farr as I am able—tho' They come from Japan and from never so farr and Look of an Indian Hue and Odour, for I admire all accomplishments that will render you considerable and Lovely in the sight of God and Man.... To learn this art costs a Guiney entrance and some 40's more to buy materials to work upon."

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John Stalker's treatise is probably the earliest printed work in connection with furniture-making. We never hear of any individual name connected with the manufacture of furniture during the oak period, although there had been a guild of cofferers. The names of the makers of the superb Charles chairs are lost in oblivion, and we have to wait till the eighteenth century before any artist-craftsman or designer gives his name to a style.

Stalker's treatise is contained in a folio volume of eighty-four pages of letterpress and twenty-four pages of copper-plate engravings. The title-page reads: "A Treatise of Japanning and Varnishing, Being a compleat discovery of those Arts. With the best way of making all sorts of Varnish for Japan, Woods, Prints, Plate or Pictures. The method of Guilding, Burnishing and Lackering with the art of Guilding, Separateing and Refining metals, and the most curios ways of painting on Glass or otherwise. Also rules for counterfeiting Tortoise Shell, and Marble and for staining or Dying Wood, Ivory, etc. Together with above an hundred distinct patterns of Japan Work, for Tables, Stands, Frames, Cabinets, Boxes &c. Curiously engraven on 24 large Copper Plates. By John Stalker September the 7th 1688. Licenced R. Midgley and entered according to order. Oxford Printed for and sold by the Author, living at the Golden Ball in St. James Market London in the year MDCLXXXVIII."

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This comprehensive work is "Dedicated to the RIGHT Honourable The Countess of Darby a lady no less eminent for her quality, Beauty and Vertue, then for her incomparable Skill and Experience in the Arts that those Experiments belong to, as well as in several others."

In a page and a half of the preface the author takes us through the history of painting from early Grecian times, particularly pointing out that the art of portrait-painting alone can keep our memories green. He goes on to say: "Well then as painting has made an honourable provision for our bodies so Japanning has taught us a method, no way inferior to it, for the splendour and preservation of our Furniture and Houses. These Buildings, like our bodies, continually tending to ruin and dissolution are still in want of fresh supplies and reparations. On the one hand they are

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assaulted with unexpected mischances, on the other with the injuries of time and weather; but the art of Japanning has made them almost impregnable against both; no damp air, no mouldring worm, or corroding time, can possibly deface it; and, which is more wonderful, although its ingredients the Gums, which are in their own nature inflammable yet this most vigorously resists the fire, and is itself found to be incombustible. True, genuine Japan, like the Salamander, lives in the flames, and stands unalterable, when the wood which was imprison'd in it, is utterly consumed.... What can be more surprising then to have our chambers overlaid with varnish more glassy and reflecting than polisht Marble? No Amorous Nymph need entertain a Dialogue with her Glass, or Narcissus retire to a Fountain, to survey his charming countenance, when the house is one entire speculum. To this we subjoin the Golden Draught, with which Japan is so exquisitely adorned, than which nothing can be more beautiful, more rich or majestick."

In John Stalker's opinion Europe, both Ancient and Modern, must in the adornments of cities give pride of place to Japan, for "surely this Province was Nature's Darling and the Favourite of the Gods, for Jupiter has vouchsafed it a visit as formally to Danae in a Golden shower."

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In an epistle to "the Reader and Practitioner" he severely censures inferior artificers who "without modesty or blush impose upon the gentry such Stuff and Trash, for Japan work, that whether it is a greater scandal to the name or artifice, I cannot determine. Might we advise such foolish pretenders, their time would be better employed in drawing Whistles and Puppets for the Toyshops to please Children, than contriving ornaments for a room of State."

He cautions the reader against the common error of mistaking Bantam work for real Japan. "This must be alledged for the Bantam work that it is very pretty," &c. &c.; but the Japan is "more grave and majestick ... the Japan artist works most of all in Gold and other metals, and Bantam for the generality in colours with a small sprinkling of Gold here and there, like the patches on a Ladie's countenance."

He professes, in the "Cutts or Patterns," to have exactly imitated the towers, steeples, figures and rocks of Japan according to designs of such found on imported specimens. "Perhaps we have helped them a little in their proportions where they were lame or defective, and made them more pleasant, yet altogether as Antick. Had we industriously contrived the prospective, or shadowed them otherwise than they are: we should have wandered from the Design, which is only to imitate the true genuine Indian work, and perhaps in a great measure might puzzle and confound the unexperienced Practitioner."

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It may interest readers to know the market prices of some of the materials used in 1688. Seed-lac, 14s. to 18s. per lb.; gum sandrack, 1s. to 1s. 2d. per lb.; gum animæ, 3s. to 5s. per lb.; Venice turpentine, 1s. 6d. to 1s. 8d. per lb.; white rosin, 4d. to 6d. per lb.; shell-lac, 1s. 6d. to 2s. per lb.; gum arabic, 1s. per lb.; gum copall, 1s. to 1s. 6d. per lb.; gum elemni, 4d. to 5d. per oz.; benjamin or benzoine, 4d. to 8d. per oz.; dragon's blood, 8d. to 1s. per oz. "Brass dust," Stalker says, cannot be made in England, though it has often been tried. The best, we learn, comes from Germany! He goes on to describe various metal-dusts, such as "Silver dust," "Green Gold," "Dirty Gold," "Powder tinn," and "Copper." Of the makers of "speckles" of divers sorts—gold, silver, copper—"I shall only mention two, viz. a Goldbeater, at the hand and hammer in Long Acre; and another of the same trade over against Mercers Chappel in Cheapside."

The twenty-four pages of "Cutts" include designs for "Powder Boxes," "Looking glass frames," "For Drauers for Cabbinets to be placed according to your fancy," and "For a Standish for Pen Inke and paper which may also serve for a comb box." The drawings include "An Embassy," "A Pagod Worshipp in ye Indies," and another sketch in which the central figure would appear to be a hybrid Red Indian before whom several devotees are grovelling.

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We have quoted John Stalker at some length as giving interesting sidelights on an industry occupying the attentions of a numerous class in his own day. For the actual carrying out of the methods employed we must refer the reader to the book itself—a book which is invaluable to any one who has a piece of Old English lac in want of repair. There is an old-world charm about the work of the Stalker and contemporary schools, but in point of real beauty it is as far removed from the Japanese lacquer as the "Oriental" porcelain of the eighteenth-century European factories is from its Chinese or Japanese prototype. The complaint has often been made of the lack of perspective in the Oriental decorations. This may be said, to use a hackneyed phrase, to be the defect of its qualities. We have by this time come to see things to a certain extent through Japanese eyes, and have learnt to love the defect.

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The artist of Old Japan—be he painter, potter, metal-worker, or lacquerer—was an artist to his finger-tips, and his work was full of a symbolism utterly incomprehensible to the Western mind. Those in Japan who know will tell you that a master lacquerer of the seventeenth century would spend many years on the decoration of a simple, small box. In the initial stage—the preparation of the background—it has been calculated that 530 hours are required in the aggregate for drying the various layers; but the young ladies at Mrs. Priest's school at Great Chelsey in the seventeenth century expect, by the aid of Stalker's instructions, to learn the art in twelve lessons! Honest John Stalker thinks he can improve upon his Japanese models, with the result that, whilst we may have a little less of the "defect," we have scarcely any of the "qualities." It is ever thus when West attempts to copy East.

We may mention in passing that the French furniture-makers of the eighteenth century utilised, in the production of some of their finest commodes, drawer-fronts and panels of genuine Japanese lacquer which must have been manufactured specially for the French market,

exhibiting, as they do, shapes quite foreign to anything in use in Japan. It is highly probable that these serpentine and bow-shaped drawer-fronts were sent out to Japan to receive their decoration. In the "Jones Bequest" at the Victoria and Albert Museum, we can see superb examples of such belonging to the period of Louis XV. It is said that Madame Pompadour expended 110,000 livres on Japanese lacquer. Marie Antoinette's collection in the Louvre is considerable; but it is quite certain that the finest examples of the art never left Japan. Mr. Huish, to whose book we have above referred, gives some interesting statistics pointing to the scarcity of fine old lacquer in this country during the early days of trade with the East. In one year during the eighteenth century eleven ships sailed, and, whilst carrying 16,580 pieces of porcelain, they brought only twelve pieces of lac. [107]

To-day Old English lacquered furniture is much sought after, and prices are advancing rapidly. The coloured varieties include red, blue, green, violet, and occasionally buff.

The red in particular is highly prized. Black lac, which was made in great quantities in every shape of furniture, is still comparatively plentiful. An early eighteenth-century grandfather's clock, which might fetch anything from five to ten pounds if the case were of plain oak, would have a selling value of from ten to twenty pounds if lacquered. [108]

Evidence points to the fact that, in the majority of cases, the lacquer was an afterthought. The furniture of the day was turned out, in the ordinary course of trade, quite innocent of lacquer, and afterwards treated by professional japanners—sometimes maltreated by amateurs. Not long since, in our own day, there was a similar craze for covering furniture with enamel paints.

[Fig. 74](#) is an interesting china cabinet in black lacquer of William and Mary period, 7 ft. 5 in. high and 5 ft. wide, priced at £30. A first-class modern mahogany or walnut-wood cabinet of the size could scarcely be made for the money, whilst the old lac, apart from its intrinsic charm, has an additional sentimental value as marking a phase in the history of furniture—a phase in decoration. In this cabinet we have also a development in form; it is palpably the product of a period when the rage for collecting porcelain was prevalent, and in the same connection it is no less useful to-day. The modern designer scarcely invents anything more appropriate. It is interesting to note this cabinet as an example of the afterthought in decoration. The owners—Messrs. Story and Triggs Ltd., of Queen Victoria Street, London—have discovered that the lacquer is superimposed on walnut veneer! It tells its own tale. [109]

[Fig. 75](#) is an early example of red lacquer, a cabinet with boldly arched cornice; the repetition of the arch at either end gives a fine architectural finish to the top. The upper part encloses shelves, and there are four drawers in the base. The decoration consists of various Chinese views of ladies in a garden, a temple with a man and children, trees, rocks and lakes. It was probably made about 1690; 75 in. high, 31 in. wide, and 23 in. deep.

[Fig. 76](#) is somewhat later—about 1710—with typical Queen Anne period cabriole legs and claw-and-ball feet. The doors, which enclose five drawers, are decorated with figures, buildings, birds and flowers, and are furnished with finely chased ormolu lock-plates and hinges. It is of black lacquer with red and gold reliefs, measures 67 in. by 39 in. by 19 in, and is valued at about £45.

[Fig. 77](#) is still later—about 1730—a cabinet surmounted on plain cabriole legs. On the front is a view of a lake with Oriental figures, cocks, and vegetation. Inside the doors are studies of the lotus-flower in vases. The hinges and lock-plates are fine examples of English metal-work in the Chinese taste. This piece is 56 in. high and 36 in. wide, and is valued at £35. [110]

For comparison we give an example ([Fig. 78](#)) of a piece of lacquered furniture made in China about 1740. This dressing-table, built of camphor-wood, and still exhaling a delicate fragrance, was evidently made for England and copied, as to shape, from an English table. It is inlaid with mother-of-pearl designs of landscape, birds, and flowers; and the interior is fitted with a mirror, writing-desk, and numerous boxes.

During the English "japanning" period, every imaginable shape of furniture received this Oriental treatment. Besides the various forms of cabinet, we find lacquered mirror-frames, dressing-tables, corner cupboards, hanging cupboards, chests and chests of drawers, chairs, work-boxes, writing-desks, coffee-tables, card-tables, pole-screens, trays, barometer-cases, and even bellows-cases.

We give an example of a simple mirror in red lacquered frame with arched top ([Fig. 79](#)). It measures 39 in. by 19 in. This and the three preceding examples are the property of Mr. F. W. Phillips, of The Manor House, Hitchin.

[Fig. 80](#) is a barometer in lacquered case of about 1700. [111]

[Fig. 81](#), at the Victoria and Albert Museum, is of Dutch make of the early eighteenth century—a dressing-glass suspended between two uprights, which are supported on a cabinet with sloping front. Inside the cabinet is a compartment with a hinged door, flanked on either side by an open compartment, one long and two short drawers. The lower part has seventeen compartments fitted with boxes, brushes, and various toilet requisites. The lacquer is raised and gilt on a red ground, showing groups of figures in Chinese costumes, buildings, landscapes and floral designs with birds.

[Fig. 82](#) is a somewhat similar glass but of English make. The woods composing it are poplar, pine and oak, and it is decorated with blue and gold lacquer, the effect of which is the reverse of

pleasing.

We have said that the European lacquer will not bear close comparison with the Old Japanese. The methods of the Chinese were simpler, and the English "japanner" (it is, of course, a misleading term) was more successful in his attempts to copy the Chinese cabinets. His best examples, if indeed they fell far short in technique, did in method to a large extent approximate to the work of the Celestial. [112]

English lacquer as a mere investment is worth buying at reasonable prices, and in choosing pieces the collector will do well to look, as much as possible, for the real Oriental feeling.



FIG. 1. MANTELPIECE IN HAMPTON COURT PALACE

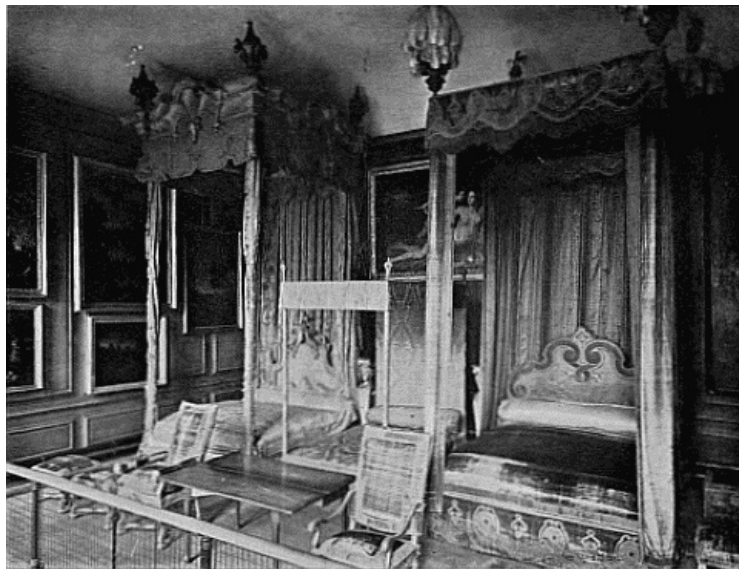


FIG. 2. BEDSTEADS AT HAMPTON COURT PALACE



FIG. 3. ROOM IN CLIFFORD'S INN
(PERIOD WILLIAM AND MARY)

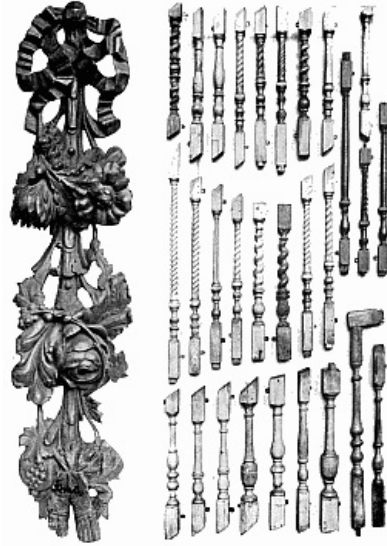


FIG. 4. CARVING IN PINEWOOD ATTRIBUTED TO GRINLING GIBBON
FIG. 5. TURNED BALUSTERS
(LATE SEVENTEENTH AND EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES)



FIG. 6. DOORWAY
(LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)

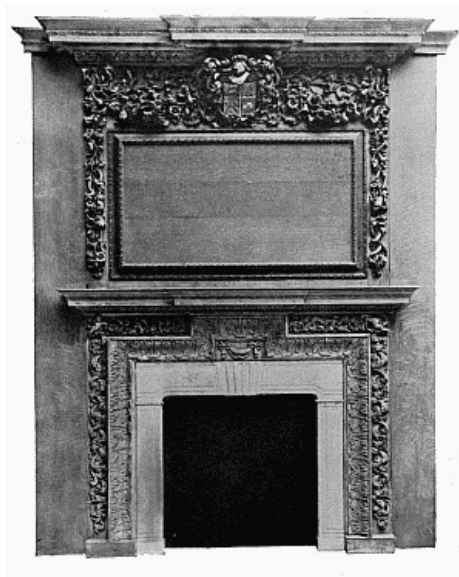


FIG. 7. OVERMANTEL
(LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 8. DOORWAY
(EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)

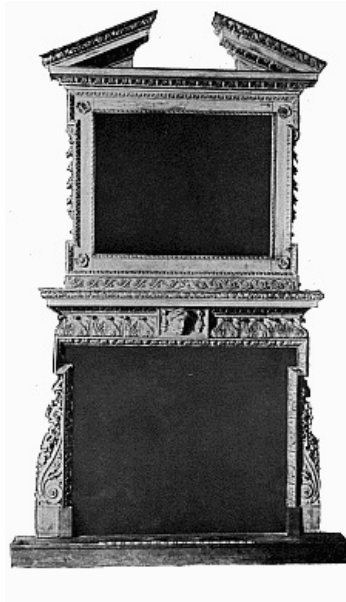


FIG. 9. MANTELPIECE
(EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 10. MIRROR FRAME
ATTRIBUTED TO GRINLING GIBBON

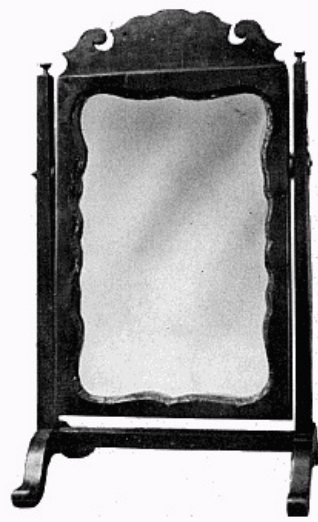


FIG. 11. SIMPLE WALL MIRROR
(QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)

FIG. 12. SIMPLE TOILET MIRROR
(QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)

(The property of Mr. F. W. Phillips, The Manor House, Hitchin)

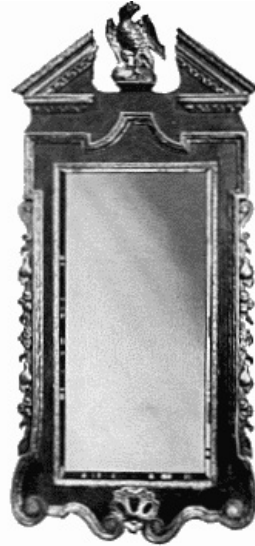
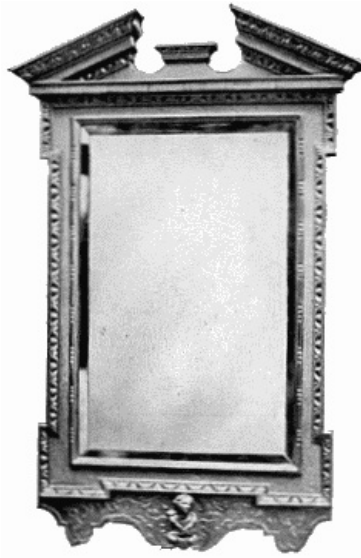


FIG. 13. WALL MIRROR
(QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)

FIG. 14. WALL MIRROR
(QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)

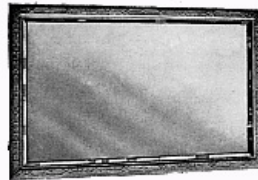


FIG. 15.

"GESSO" MIRROR (QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)
FIG. 16. "GESSO" MIRROR
(QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 17. FINE "GESSO" MIRROR
(QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)

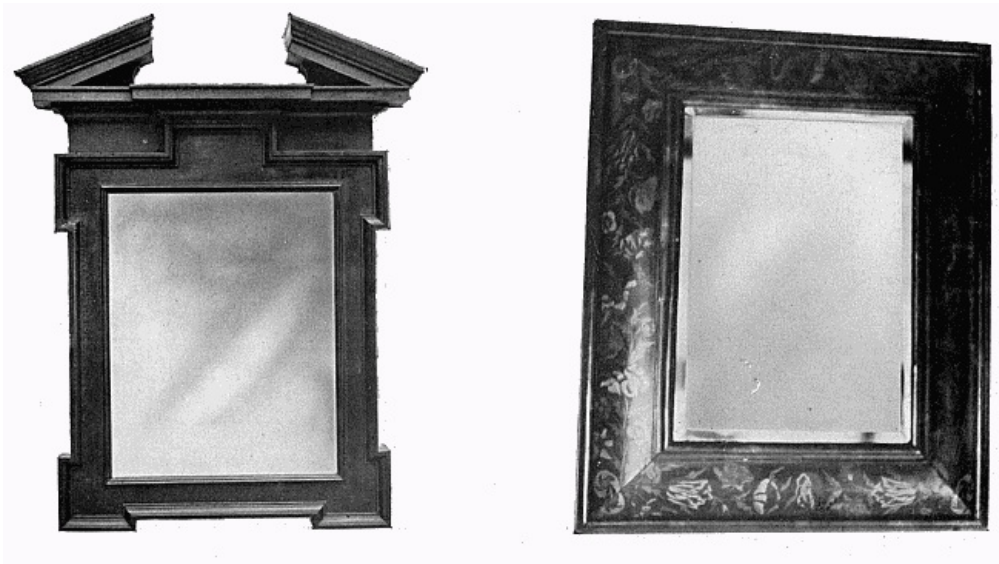


FIG. 18.
MIRROR FROM "FLASK" TAVERN
PIMLICO, DATE ABOUT 1700
FIG. 19. MARQUETRY MIRROR
(EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)

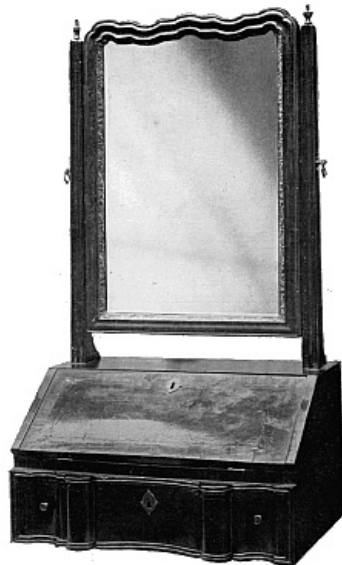


FIG. 20. TOILET MIRROR WITH DRAWERS
(QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 21. TOILET MIRROR ON STAND
(QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 22. STOOL (PERIOD OF WILLIAM AND MARY)



FIG. 23. FINE STOOL (PERIOD QUEEN ANNE)



FIG. 24. FIG. 25. FIG. 26.
FINE CHAIRS (PERIOD WILLIAM AND MARY)



FIG. 27. FINE CHAIR
(PERIOD WILLIAM AND MARY)

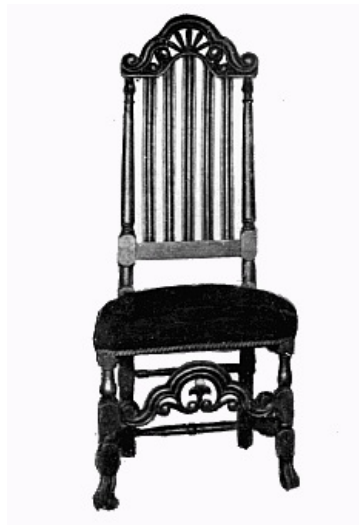


FIG. 28. SIMPLE CHAIR
(PERIOD WILLIAM AND MARY)
(The property of F. W. Phillips, The Manor House,
Hitchin, Herts)



FIG. 29. FIG. 30 FIG. 31.
SIMPLE CHAIRS (PERIOD QUEEN ANNE)
(The property of Mr. J. H. Springett, High Street, Rochester)



FIG. 32.
SIMPLE CHAIR WITH CABRIOLE LEGS
(QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 33. FIG. 34. FIG. 35.
SIMPLE CHAIRS WITH CABRIOLE LEGS
(QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)
(The property of Mr. J. H. Springett, High Street, Rochester)



FIG. 36. QUEEN ANNE CHAIR WITH INLAID SPLAT
FIG. 37. LATE QUEEN ANNE CHAIR



FIG. 38. FINE ARM CHAIR (QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 39. ARM CHAIR (QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)
COVERED WITH "PETIT POINT" NEEDLEWORK



FIG. 40. FINE CHAIR (LATE QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 41.
FINE CHAIR (LATE QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 42.
CORNER OR ROUNDABOUT CHAIR (LATE QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 43. SETTEE (WILLIAM AND MARY PERIOD)



FIG. 44. FINE SETTEE (LATE QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)
FIG. 45. FINE SETTEE (LATE QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 46.
TABLE (PERIOD WILLIAM AND MARY)
(The property of Mr. F. W. Phillips, The Manor
House, Hitchin)
FIG. 47.
TABLE (PERIOD WILLIAM AND MARY)



FIG. 48. TABLE (WILLIAM AND MARY PERIOD)



FIG. 49. TABLE (LATE QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 50. CHEST OF DRAWERS (WILLIAM AND MARY PERIOD)



FIG. 51. CHEST OF DRAWERS (WILLIAM AND MARY PERIOD)



FIG. 52. CHEST OF DRAWERS ON TWISTED LEGS
(WILLIAM AND MARY PERIOD)



FIG. 53. DWARF CHEST OF DRAWERS ON FEET
(WILLIAM AND MARY PERIOD)



FIG. 54.
FINE CHEST ON STAND (WILLIAM AND MARY PERIOD)



FIG. 55.
SIMPLE CHEST ON STAND (WILLIAM AND
MARY PERIOD)



FIG. 56. TALLBOY (QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)

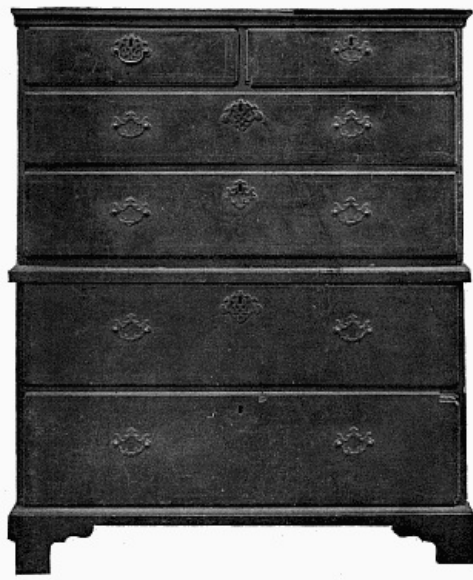


FIG. 57. TALLBOY (QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 58. WARDROBE IN MARQUETRY
(The property of Mr. F. W. Phillips, The Manor House, Hitchin, Herts)



FIG. 59. CHINA CABINET IN MARQUETRY



FIG. 60. SIMPLE BUREAU
(WILLIAM AND MARY PERIOD)



FIG. 61. BUREAU (WILLIAM AND MARY PERIOD)



FIG. 62. BUREAU (QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 63. WRITING TABLE (QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 64.
WRITING OR DRESSING TABLE (QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)



FIG. 65. FIG. 66.
ESCRITOIRE (QUEEN ANNE PERIOD)





FIG. 67. "BIRDCAGE" CLOCK
(SECOND HALF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 68.
LANTERN CLOCK IN HOODED CASE
(FIRST HALF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 69.
LANTERN CLOCK WITHOUT CASE
(FIRST HALF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 70. BRACKET CLOCK
(SEVENTEENTH CENTURY)



FIG. 73. FIG. 72. FIG. 71.
MARQUETRY CLOCKS AND CLOCK CASES



FIG. 74. LACQUERED CHINA CABINET



FIG. 75. LACQUERED CABINET WITH DRAWERS



FIG. 76. LACQUERED CABINET



FIG. 77. LACQUERED CABINET



FIG. 78. LACQUERED DRESSING-TABLE

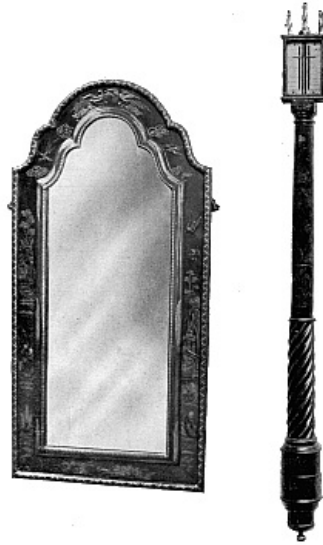


FIG. 79. LACQUERED MIRROR
FIG. 80. BAROMETER IN LACQUERED CASE

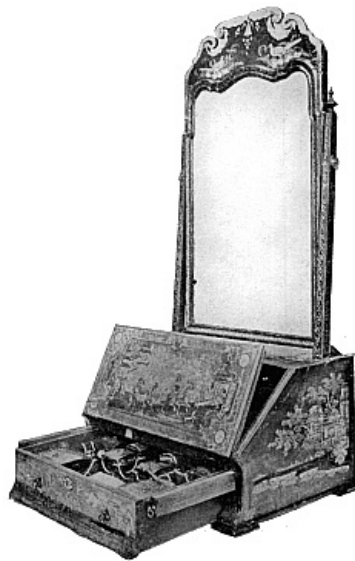


FIG. 81.
LACQUERED TOILET MIRROR



FIG.82.
LACQUERED TOILET MIRROR

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[1] The bathroom is, however, not in itself so modern in England as might be supposed. Wheatley mentions that as early as the fourteenth century a bathroom was attached to the bed-chamber in the houses of the great nobles, but more often a big tub with a covering like a tent was used.

[2] James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, who as Paymaster of the Forces during the wars in the reign of Queen Anne amassed a large fortune, built Canons, near Edgware, in 1715. The building and furnishing is said to have cost between £200,000 and £250,000. It was in the classical or Palladian style of architecture, and was adorned with costly pillars and statuary. The great *salon* was painted by the Paolucci and the ceiling of the staircase by Thornhill. Although the building was designed to stand for ages, under the second Duke the estate became so encumbered that it was put up to auction, and as no buyer could be found the house was pulled down in 1747. The materials of "Princely Canons" realised only £11,000. The marble staircase and pillars were bought by Lord Chesterfield for his house in Mayfair. The witty Earl used to speak of the columns as "the Canonical pillars of his house." The Grinling Gibbon carving of the "Stoning of St. Stephen" was transferred to Bush Hill Park, near Enfield, and finally acquired in 1898 by the Victoria and Albert Museum at a cost of £300.

[3] The splat of the original is nicely inlaid, but it is impossible to adequately reproduce this in a photograph.

[4] Addison wrote that "an old lady of fourscore shall be so busy in cleaning an Indian mandarin as her great-granddaughter is in dressing her baby."

- [5] Fine tables of this type are very expensive. One such was sold at Christie's in June 1911 for fifty-eight guineas. It was thus described: "A William and Mary walnut-wood table, with one drawer, the top inlaid with a chariot, flowers and birds, in marqueterie of various woods, on turned legs with X-shaped stretcher—38 in. wide."
- [6] Strictly speaking, De Vyck's clock, invented about 1370, is the earliest known type of the domestic clock. Made for the wealthy few in days when the generality of people did not look upon clocks as necessities, they only exist to-day as rare museum specimens.

Transcriber's Note: The hyphenation of some words has been standardised.

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VOLUME II. THE PERIOD OF QUEEN ANNE ***

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