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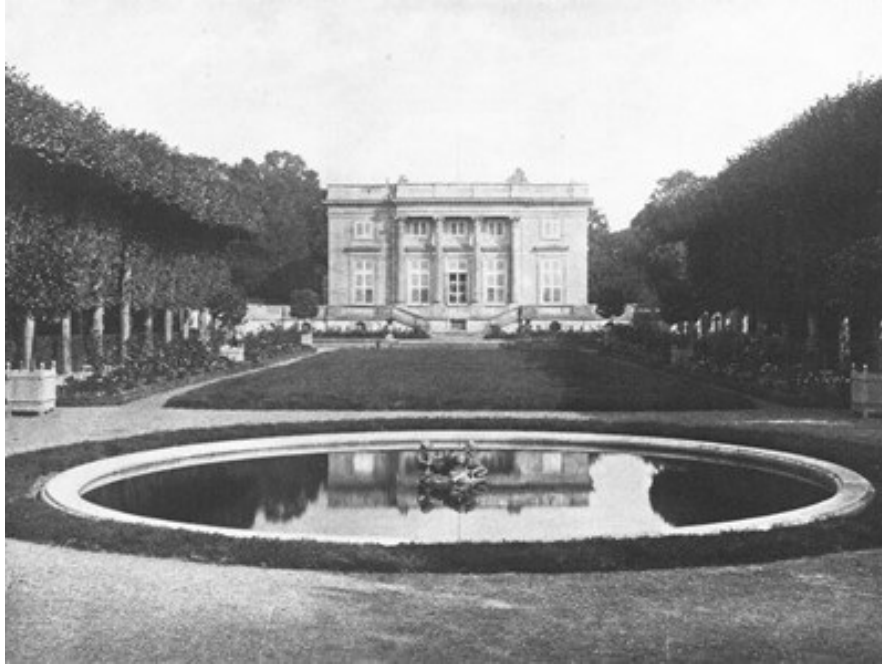
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THE BROCHURE SERIES  
**The Petit Trianon:  
Versailles**

**English Carved Fireplaces**

APRIL, 1900



**PLATE XXVII**

**CHATEAU, PETIT TRIANON**

THE  
**Brochure Series**  
OF ARCHITECTURAL  
ILLUSTRATION.

1900.

APRIL

No. 4.

**THE PETIT TRIANON: VERSAILLES.**

During the first years of his reign, Louis the XIV. of France resided, as his predecessors had, at St. Germain in summer; but for some reason—it is alleged that it was because the windows of the palace commanded a view of St. Denis, the royal mausoleum—he conceived a dislike to it, and resolved to build another summer palace for himself at some spot not far from Paris. Why he chose Versailles is incomprehensible.

Whatever may have been the motive, however, he decided to erect upon this desolate, waterless and uninhabited site a vast palace to be surrounded by a park.

The cost of accomplishing this project was fearful, not in money alone (although this was more than one thousand million francs), but in human life. In 1681 twenty-two thousand soldiers and six thousand horses were employed on the work, and so unhealthy was the site that the workmen died by thousands. Writing in 1767, Madame de Sévigné says: "The King is in haste that Versailles should be finished; but it would seem that God is unwilling. It is almost impossible to continue the work owing to the fearful mortality among the workmen. The corpses are fetched away by cartfuls during the night,—night being chosen that they who still live may not be terrified into revolt by the sight." But no difficulty, nor the pestilence, nor the ruin of the treasury was allowed to interfere with the King's pleasure. The palace rose; the stately gardens, peopled with statues, spread about it; and a royal city sprang up where before had been only a desolate forest; and, after 1682, Versailles became the permanent headquarters of the Court.

In the immense park, some three-quarters of a mile northwest from the terraces of the palace, Louis XIV. built a little palace to gratify Madame de Maintenon, which, from the fact that it stood on the site of the parish of Trianon, which was demolished to make a site for it, and because its façade was ornamented with porcelain plaques of blue and white faience ware, was called the "Trianon de Porcelaine"; but in 1687 Louis, who had as Saint-Simon said, "a rage for building," demolished this frail structure and replaced it with another, designed by Mansart, which we now know as the "Grand Trianon." This building was the King's delight for a few years, but after 1700 he wearied of the plaything, and turned all his attention to his new château at Marly.



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**PLATE XXVIII "GROTTO" AND "BELVEDERE," PETIT TRIANON**

During the Regency the Trianon was almost abandoned; but when, under Louis XV., the Court returned to Versailles, the building became a favorite refuge for the King; and he later gave it to his mistress, Madame de Pompadour, for her own. She, being at her wits' end to devise some new scheme to distract the daily increasing melancholy of the King, hit upon the expedient of establishing in the grounds which were attached to the Grand Trianon, a real practical dairy and farm; and for that purpose imported from Holland a herd of fine cows, and collected a number of

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rare varieties of hens and pigeons, which Louis amused himself for some time in breeding. But in 1754 the royal caprice again changed, and Louis abolished the farm, and made the land into a botanical garden. Here he established conservatories for raising fruits out of their natural seasons, and collected a great number of exotic trees and shrubs of every variety and species. Taking great delight in this garden, which was some distance from the Grand Trianon, he conceived the notion of building in the midst of it a still smaller château, modelled upon the Grand Trianon as that itself had been a miniature of Versailles. This château, the Little Trianon, was erected in 1766 by the royal architect, Gabriel, and was given by the King to the mistress who had succeeded Madame du Pompadour in his favor, Madame Du Barry. It was while staying at the Petit Trianon that Louis was attacked by the small-pox, of which he died.



**"TEMPLE OF LOVE"**

**PETIT TRIANON**

The château of the Petit Trianon is an interesting building, architecturally, marking, as it does, the transition stage between the styles of Louis XV. and Louis XVI.—a return to purer classical traditions. The façade is ornamented by a portico with four detached Corinthian columns, and the whole is surmounted by a balustrade. The reception and billiard rooms occupied the first floor, while the second was occupied by the private apartments.

While Marie Antoinette was still the Dauphine, she had often expressed a desire to have a château, apart from the palace, for her own, where, free from the intolerable restraints of Court etiquette, she might amuse herself as she chose; and shortly after his accession to the throne, Louis XVI. is said to have presented her with the Trianons with the words, "They have always belonged to the King's favorites, and should therefore now be yours." The Queen answered laughingly that she would gladly accept the Little Trianon, but only upon the condition that it should be unreservedly her own, and that even the King should come there only upon her express invitation.



**PLATE XXIX "QUEEN'S HOUSE" AND "BILLIARD HALL," PETIT TRIANON**

Marie Antoinette's first wish, after becoming mistress of her new domain, was to establish there a garden after the English style. The rage for the English garden had just then seized French society, for it was believed to be a return to Nature—Nature which Rousseau just then had made it the fashion to adore, and the nobility were all for playing at rusticity, and full of sentimental admiration for the country.

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The King humored the whim, and gave orders that the gardens already existing at the Trianon should be remodelled, that the strip of land joining it should be added, and the whole surrounded with a wall, and the work pushed as rapidly as possible.

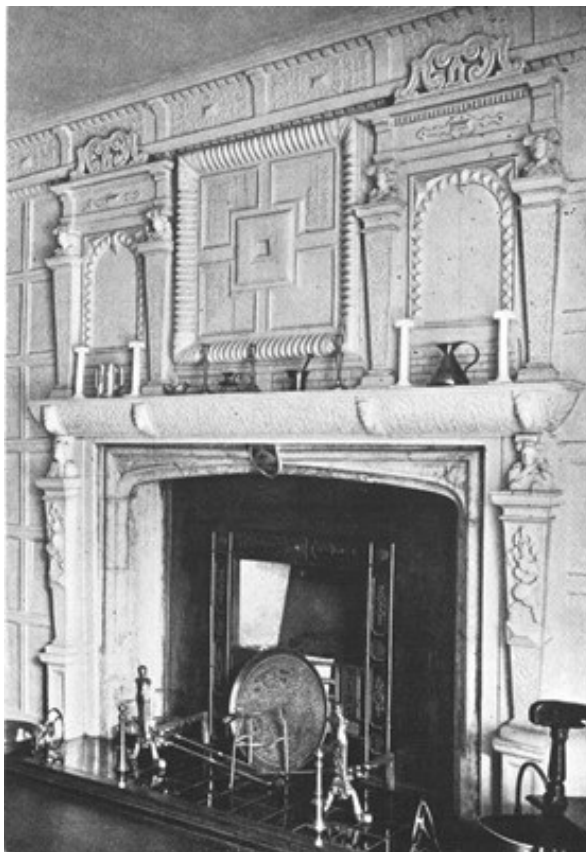
The plans for the English garden were drawn by Comte de Caraman, an officer who had already arranged such a garden in connection with his own residence, and this garden the Queen had visited. In 1775 the new royal architect, Mique, seconded by the painter, Hubert Robert, the sculptor, Deschamps, and the landscape gardener, Antoine Richard, joined in working out the plans of the Comte de Caraman, and created an English garden after the Queen's fancy. Unhappily, however, in order to create this new garden it became necessary to destroy a large part of the botanical garden which had before existed; but many of the fine exotic trees were employed in working out the new design, and these trees still remain the finest ornaments of the park.

The plan for the English garden was comprised as follows: In the more formal portions of the grounds near the château an artificial grotto and a "Belvedere," and, shadowed by overhanging trees, a little "Temple de l'Amour." Separated from these classical constructions by an artificial lake, bordered with rustic paths and intended to represent a bit of natural country, was erected a picturesque miniature hamlet of nine or ten rustic cottages in which the court ladies, under the lead of the Queen, might play at peasant life.

The grotto was a work of some elaboration, and it was said that no less than seven relief models of it were made before the Queen expressed herself as satisfied with the design. It is an arrangement of artificial rocks covered with moss, through which flows the outlet stream of the little lake. It was at one time proposed, after the then fashion in English gardening, to build on the top of the grotto a picturesquely contrived ruin, but this project was abandoned.

Near the grotto stands the Belvedere—a coquettish little octagonal pavilion set on a stone platform. Four windows and four doors are set alternately in its eight surfaces, and a balustrade surrounds the domed roof. The interior was ornamented in delicately frescoed stucco.

The Temple of Love consists of twelve Corinthian columns supporting a cupola. The pavement is of white blue-veined marble. In the centre is a carved pedestal on which stands a statue of Cupid drawing his bow, modelled by Bouchardon.



**MANTELPIECE** **RESTORATION HOUSE,**  
**ROCHESTER**

The most picturesque feature of the garden was, however, the village or hamlet, and it is here the life of the Trianon centered in the time of the Queen.

The houses with which the hamlet was comprised were situated on the farther shore of a small artificial lake; and were divided into two groups separated by a running stream. The first group was made up of the "Queen's House" and its connected "Billiard Hall," and the "Mill": the second originally comprised five buildings;—a "Gardener's Lodge," a "Poultry House," a tower, called "Marlborough's Tower" with a "Dairy" attached to it, and, at some distance from these, a "Farm House" with its dependencies.

We have preferred in the description to adhere to the names by which these buildings were originally called rather than to adopt the more fanciful nomenclature given to them later by an imaginative German, Dr. Meyer, who visited France in 1796 and who invented the story that the Queen, playing at rural life, had entrusted the King with the rôle of the farmer, while she became the farmer's wife and the Count d'Artois the huntsman, the Comte de Provence the miller, and the Cardinal de Rohan the curé of this tiny community. In accordance with this unfounded tale the Queen's house has been nicknamed the "Maison du Seigneur," the poultry house the "Presbytère" and so forth,—and these nicknames have clung to them ever since.



**PLATE XXX** **"QUEEN'S HOUSE," PETIT TRIANON**

The simplicity of the buildings of the hamlet makes it unnecessary to describe them in detail. They were erected during the years 1783, 1784 and 1785 from designs by the architect Mique. The exteriors were covered with stucco to represent old brick, weather-worn stone and worm-eaten wood, and all of them, with the exception of the "Queen's House" which was partly covered with tiles, were roofed with thatch.

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The "Queen's House" and "Billiard Hall" were connected by a rustic gallery, painted olive-green. The former contained a dining-room and some private apartments. The "Billiard Hall," as its name implies, was mainly occupied by a billiard room over which were sleeping chambers.



**MANTELPiece**

**STANDISH HALL**

The "Mill" was at one time furnished with a mill-wheel and actually and practically used to grind grain for the inhabitants of the tiny village. The "Gardener's House" has been demolished. The "Poultry-House" was at one time used for the care of fowls and pigeons of which the Queen had a large number.



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**PLATE  
XXXI**

**"DAIRY" AND "MARLBOROUGH'S TOWER," PETIT  
TRIANON**

As we have said, an almost indispensable feature of the English garden of this time was an artificial ruin; but although many models were made for the erection of such a ruin at the Petit-Trianon, none was ever erected. As a substitute however, a round tower was built, and in honor of the original the "Chanson de Marlborough," with its simple and plaintive air, which had just then been revived in popular favor, was named "Marlborough's Tower." It is probable that the building was supposed to suggest that tower from which Marlborough's widow saw the page "*tout de noir habillé*" who came to tell her of her husband's death. The tower ascended by an exterior staircase, and at the top was a circular balcony from which a view of the whole domain was visible, and from which signals might be exchanged with the palace at Versailles.



MANTELPIECE

MONTACUTE HOUSE

The tower was connected by a passage with the "Dairy,"—an actual and practical creamery on a small scale, in which the Queen and her ladies played at making butter and cheese. The walls and floor were tiled with marble, and the tables on which the pans and utensils—all of decorated porcelain—were set out were also of marble. A running stream of water was conducted through the dairy to keep it cool.

The "Farm" buildings comprised a group of constructions, in which the farmer lodged, and in which were stables for cows of which the Queen had a splendid Swiss herd.

The completed gardens of the Little Trianon excited the most lively praise. The poet, Chevalier Bertin, dedicated a whole elegy to them; the Prince de Ligne wrote, "Here truly one may breathe air of happiness and liberty. One might believe one's self a hundred leagues from the Court." The village presented a real aspect of a rural hamlet. Indeed the Queen had under her eyes a living picture of the country, whence she could see the cows grazing, peasants laboring in the fields, the cultivation of gardens, the pruning of trees, the cows coming to drink at the lake, the washwomen washing their clothes at the stream which flowed from the mill, and the little mill itself, grinding grain for the inhabitants of this miniature village.

It was at this Trianon that Marie Antoinette spent her happiest days. "The Queen," writes Madam Campan, "spent sometimes an entire month together at the Little Trianon, where she had established her pianoforte and tapestry frames." There were but few apartments in the château of the Little Trianon and although Madame Elizabeth usually accompanied the Queen here, the ladies of honor could not be accommodated, and unless by special invitation from the Queen it was the rule to come from Versailles only at the dinner hour. The King and the Princess came regularly to sup. A white muslin and a straw hat was the accustomed dress of the princesses, and the pleasure of running about the little village to see the cows milked and to fish in the lake, enchanted the Queen, and with every successive year she showed less inclination for the stiff etiquette of the Court.

Here on the 5th of October, the news was brought her of the arrival at the Court of the crowd of women from Paris, and she was forced to go immediately to Versailles to meet them, never again to see her little domain.





**PLATE XXXII**

**"THE MILL," PETIT TRIANON**

## English Carved Fireplaces

In adopting the Renaissance style as a motive in interior decoration, England lagged behind the Continental nations. Such English mansions and furniture as remained after the Wars of the Roses were all of the Gothic type; and with no other models available, it was but natural that the first efforts of English workmen, after art began to revive, should be Gothic in feeling. Moreover, for a long time most of the carved wood-work and furniture in the new style with which England was supplied, was imported from Holland, and it is in some measure to Dutch example that the heavy character of the Elizabethan style in furniture and carving must be attributed.

The style was, therefore, neither Classic nor Gothic, but a mixture of the two, tinged with Dutch and Flemish influence; and yet, mongrel as it was, it had an individuality of its own—a certain, royal, dignified and stately charm.

The first distinguishing feature of Elizabethan ornamental carving is "strap-work," a term which exactly describes this elaborate tracery,—an imitation of straps and buckles, varied sufficiently to atone for the meagreness of the type, and relying for its decorative value upon its repetition and symmetry. There are many rooms in old English houses where this strap-decoration is carried out with so delicate and fanciful a use of the interlacing line as to be nearly as satisfying as the Saracenic work of the same type; but it is, after all, nothing but a play of line, and, while allowing the greatest scope to the individuality of the artist, requires genius to properly develop it. Too frequently it is but the merest medley of uninteresting sequences; and when the shield-work (and pierced shield-work at that) was superadded, it sometimes became mere confusion.



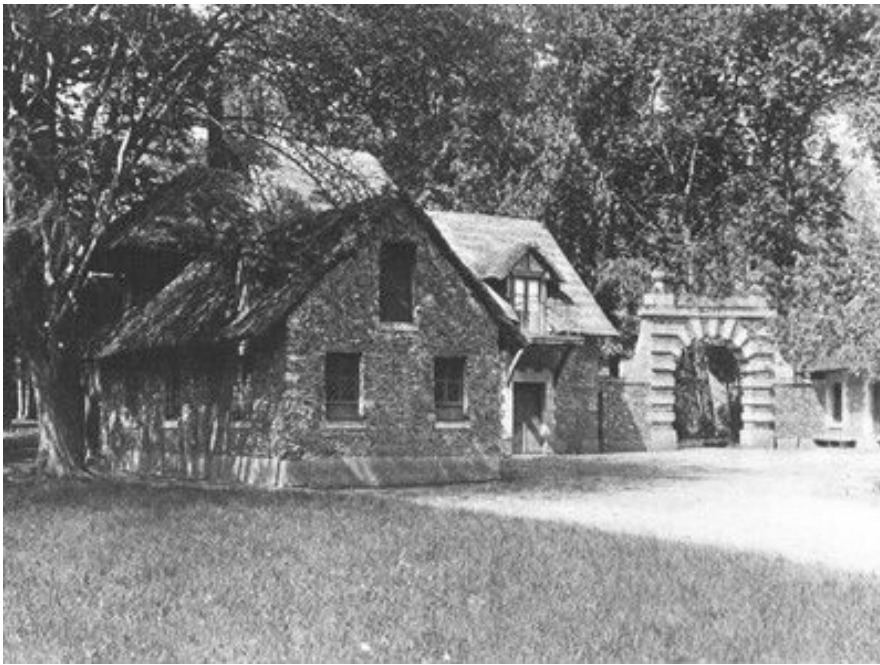
**MANTELPIECE**

**STOKESAY CASTLE**

Another distinguishing motive of shield-work,—the cartouch—is simply what its name implies, the representation of the armorial shield with its supports. The supports were pierced in every conceivable manner with circles, lozenges, crescents and all sorts of openings.

"The Elizabethan, pure and simple," writes Mrs. Spofford, "has this strap-work sometimes finished off with slight scrolls—'foliages,' the Italians called them—and associated with some classical ideas not yet very exclusively or carefully managed; straps appearing well riveted to the middle of classic ornaments, and antique shapes rising, from the curious Renaissance pilaster, which was neither a vase nor a pilaster, in truth, broken as it is half way by the rising shape, like those of the *Termae*, with which the ancients made their boundaries sacred, smaller at the base than anywhere else, and bearing straps, arabesques and rosettes on its face."

You will sometimes find an Elizabethan chimney-piece, the fluted and channelled columns, and the entablature of which are almost quite pure in style, and yet, almost invariably, somewhere about their length strap-ornament is sure to be introduced.

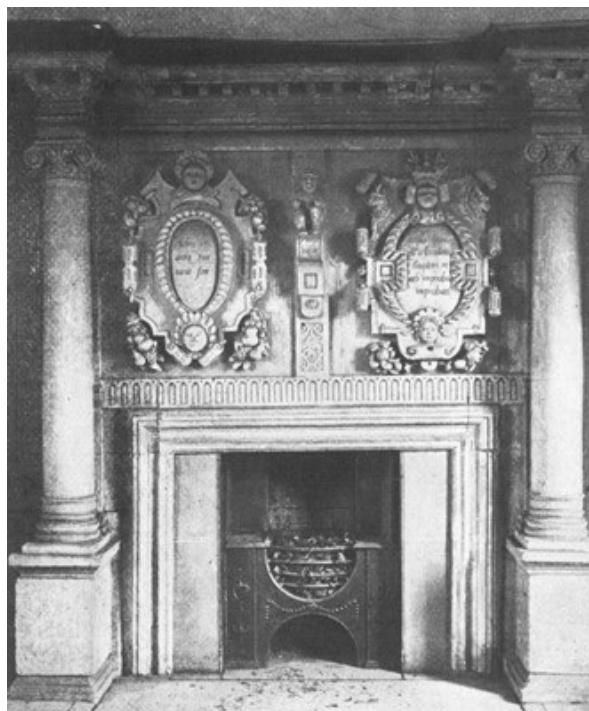


**PLATE XXXIII**

**"FARM HOUSE," PETIT TRIANON**

With the accession of James I. to the English throne a new influx of foreign influence made fresh havoc with such Gothic as remained. The shield, which, through a preference for the strap had been but sparsely used in the preceding reign, came now to be the centre of all decoration, and was lavished everywhere in a wild whirl of flourishing curves, together with the previously common straps and buckles and general tackle of war. Its universal use gave a somewhat less interesting air to the decoration than when the purer interlacing of the strap, with but here and there the convolutions of the shield, supplied its place.

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**MANTELPIECE**

**WRAXHALL MANOR**

But the Jacobean by no means contented itself with this simpler form of the Renaissance. In other characteristics it tended more and more to the Classic, though never arriving at purity. In construction, the horizontal of the antique mingled with the vertical of the mediæval, and a volute upheld the pointed arch; in ornament, the Tudor leaf with a Grecian frieze, with other equally inappropriate arrangements. It was not for a hundred years thereafter that pure Classic came to be understood in England. The scallop shell seems, at this period, to have caught the fancy of the designers as a motive, and they used it at every turn. These shell forms and the shell in decoration disputed with cartouch and straps, with rosette and scroll, with the fabulous griffins, and with grotesque mermaids, whose tails, turning into scrolls, are seen dividing to the right and left in the ornamentation of Jacobean furniture and chimney-pieces.



**MANTELPIECE**

**WRAXHALL MANOR**

But the influence of the Italian form of the Renaissance, through the filter of the Flemish, made itself very distinctly felt in the Jacobean style; not so much in the effort of the Italian toward æsthetic perfection, as in the play of fancy, stimulated by the sight of new forms, but unacquainted with the laws that should control them.

Upon whatever architectural or decorative scheme it was based, however, the carving of this period was extremely rich and beautiful; and in consequence the time has come to be known as the "Cinquecento period" in English art, which corresponds in many of its characteristics to the style known in other countries by the same name. The illustrations show the development of these styles and the main characteristics which have been pointed out.



**PLATE XXXIV**

**"POULTRY HOUSE," PETIT TRIANON**

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