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AN INTRODUCTION TO OLD ENGLISH FURNITURE



BY
W. E. MALLETT
ILLUSTRATIONS
BY H. P. BROCK



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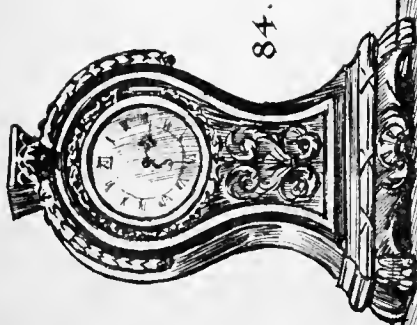




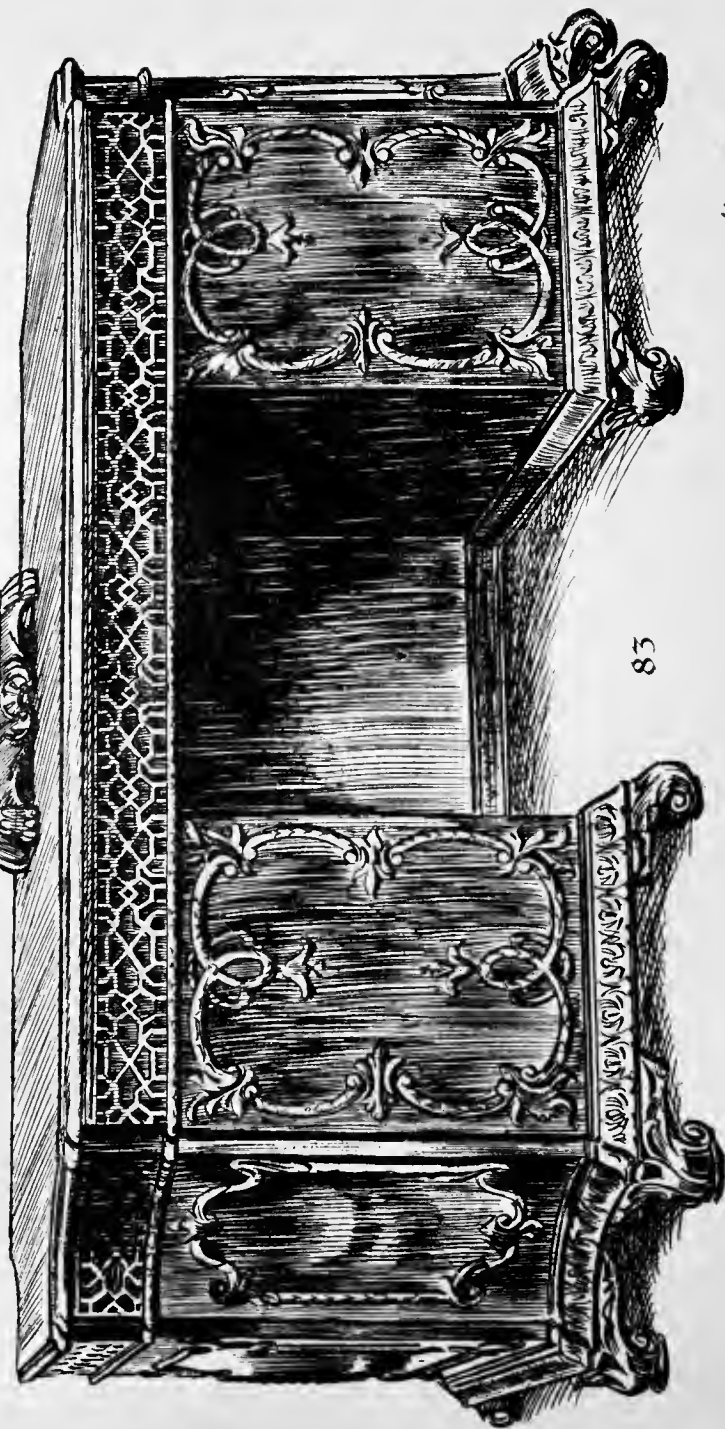


AN INTRODUCTION
TO
OLD ENGLISH
FURNITURE

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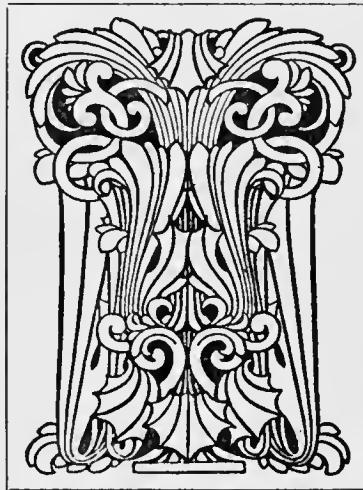
M. B. Beck

AN INTRODUCTION TO
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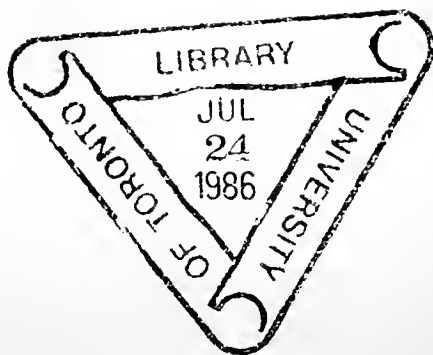
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PUBLISHED BY GEORGE NEWNES LIMITED,
SOUTHAMPTON STREET, STRAND, W.C.;
MALLETT AND SON, THE OCTAGON, BATH;
AND CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS, NEW YORK



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HUDSON AND KEARNS
PRINTERS
LONDON, S.E.

AN INTRODUCTION TO OLD ENGLISH FURNITURE

THE following notes are intended to act as a ready guide to those who feel an interest in this subject, but have neither time nor inclination to study a lengthy work. The aim is to show in a concise manner the successive periods of English furniture, to give the origin and evolution of each style, to point out its most characteristic features, and to explain how to determine the date of any particular specimen.

In such a work the pictures tell the story almost better than the letterpress. I feel, therefore, that I have been very fortunate to secure the help of Mr. H. M. Brock, whose drawings not only faithfully reproduce the piece, but seem in some subtle way to convey the spirit of the time in which it was made. Every sketch has been taken by the artist from furniture now or recently in the possession of my firm at the Octagon. Many of the examples have been purposely chosen of a simple character, because they are more typical; and because, being more obtainable, they are more interesting to the average collector. It is, indeed, the fine drawing in the simplest bit of old work, rather than its elaboration, which is its special charm. With regard to values, rare and elaborate pieces are now, of course, costly; but much genuine and satisfactory work of this simpler type can still be procured for moderate sums. The collector who aims at having everything of one period should avoid a very early date, as many of the comforts, which have become the necessities of a modern house, were not then understood, and it means that furniture, more or less new in character, has to be put up with, or worse, that old bits are pulled to pieces and made up into other articles. In this way many a fine antique bedstead has been destroyed to create a sideboard or mantelpiece of no artistic or monetary value whatever.

These notes have, of course, no pretension to be even a brief history of English furniture. All who are desirous of becoming fully acquainted with this very interesting subject should obtain the important work now being brought out by Mr. Percy McQuoid, a most accurate and beautiful book, illustrated by examples from all the greater collections in the country, and written with a rare knowledge.

W. E. MALLETT

THE OCTAGON

BATH



TUDOR AND STUART
SOLID OAK AND WALNUT
FURNITURE

TUDOR AND STUART

SOLID OAK & WALNUT FURNITURE

STYLES of furniture succeed each other in waves. In this, first period, almost everything was made of solid wood, and though the decoration varied, the whole of this solid work was dependent rather on form than colour for its effect. Later this was succeeded by a time in which, during the Dutch influence, everything was veneered, and form, to a certain extent, became subservient to colour. The early Hanoverian period was a return, caused by the introduction of mahogany, to solid work, and once more form, instead of colour, was relied on to produce decorative effect. About 1770 taste once more changed. This solid furniture was discarded, veneers of rich woods, gilded and even painted surfaces, again asserted the claims of colour, until the style, from being varied and lovely, became fantastic and impracticable, and was, in its turn, replaced by the very useful, but very clumsy solid work of early Victorian days.

These alternations from the use of form for the attainment of beauty in the solid furniture, to the use of colour for that purpose in the veneered and painted, are the key-note of every change. Each mode of decoration at the time it was abandoned seemed to have exhausted the resources which were contained in it of further development, but when, after it had been superseded for a long time by its rival method of construction and decoration, it returned, it started with different inspiration, and achieved another success, reigning once more only as long as it succeeded in developing fresh forms of beauty, and succumbing to its rival as soon as it showed signs of staleness.

In the early periods of English furniture, European woods, oak, walnut, and elm, were almost exclusively used; oak, plain and solid, or slightly inlaid with sycamore and yew, being mainly employed. The most elaborate and beautiful work in oak dates from the end of Elizabeth to nearly the end of Charles II. After this, though still largely used, it was employed where the more costly woods were grudged for the purpose.

Few fine oak pieces for reception rooms are found later than 1680, though a great deal of simple, nice work was made up to the reign of George II., when the fall in the price of mahogany rendered it as cheap or cheaper to use that wood.

TUDOR AND STUART (SOLID OAK AND WALNUT FURNITURE)

In the mid-Tudor work, Italian influence replaces the old Gothic. The decoration chiefly used is fine carving, sometimes in conjunction with a little bold sparse inlay of sycamore.

In the reigns of James I. and Charles I. various forms of panelling took the place of carving, and the chests and buffets display most intricate and beautiful patterns, composed of those panels spaced out with spindles, etc. The solid chair is succeeded by the elegant high-backed cane type, and, as will be noticed in the following sketches, oak gradually gave way to walnut as the favourite wood.

The principal pieces of furniture, of an elaborate description, were state and other four-post beds, settles often with beautiful panelled backs, dower-chests, long drawing-out tables, and court cupboards or buffets. In the earlier Stuart days a great deal of the furniture was draped with valuable velvets and silks, and of such pieces little is left, as when the coverings were worn out the plain frames were thrown away and destroyed.

TUDOR AND STUART

SOLID OAK AND WALNUT FURNITURE

1. An early form of oak arm-chair, showing on the back panel in the centre, and round the frame, a little bold inlay of sycamore.
2. A characteristic simple oak table, *circa* 1600.
3. A chest, with carved oak front and panelled lid and sides, a style made during the early Stuart time.
4. A child's high chair, early Stuart, of solid oak. These small chairs so early are rare, but they were made in every period.
5. An unusual specimen of the so-called grandfather, the earliest kind of easy chair. These were subsequently very largely made, both in Queen Anne and early Hanoverian days, then following, of course, the current style or design, but rarely met with in Jacobean times. The head rests are rudely carved on the outside, and they and the beaded frame are in oak. The chair was originally covered in leather, and is about 1650.
6. An oak chest of drawers about the same date. This is a simple illustration of the panelled work referred to in the introduction. These designs are very like that of the plastered ceilings of this time, and as these ceilings owed their origin to the groined roofs of the Perpendicular Gothic, so this panelling is probably related to the stone panelling of the same style. The drawers in these chests run in side grooves instead of on bearers. The top drawers are usually deeper than the lower ones. It has the characteristic drop handles.



H. B. ROCK



H. B. ROCK

TUDOR AND STUART SOLID OAK AND WALNUT FURNITURE

7. This settee, about 1600 in date, has a well-carved back. The seat lifts up and forms a chest for rugs, etc. The arms are plain and very characteristic in shape.
8. This table is of the Elizabethan period. The legs with the big carved tops remind one oddly of the trunk hose then worn by men. Their general shape is that of a covered cup, surmounted by an Ionic Capital. The floors at this time being still strewn with rushes, the rails at the bottom served to place the feet on as well as to strengthen the construction. The frame of the table is carved with a fine bold nulling, used both in the furniture and in the silver of this reign.



8

H.M. ROCK

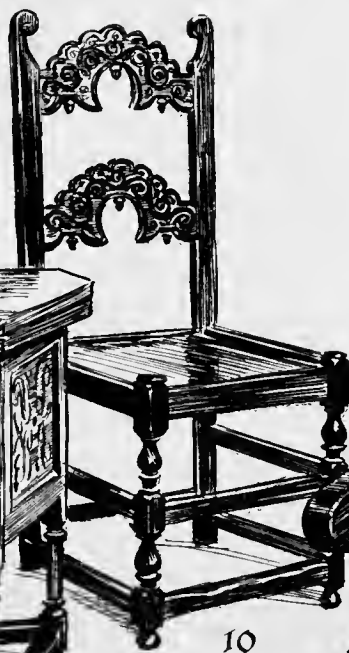
TUDOR AND STUART SOLID OAK AND WALNUT FURNITURE

9. A small oak cupboard; the back leg moves out, and the flap at the top folds over and makes a table. These are scarce pieces, about 1600 in date, and decorative in an oak room.
10. A solid oak chair of the Stuart period. These are often called Yorkshire chairs, and are most frequently met with in the North of England.
11. An early oak arm-chair, showing the panelled and spindle decoration commonly found on pieces of furniture contemporary with cane-back chairs.



H. Brock

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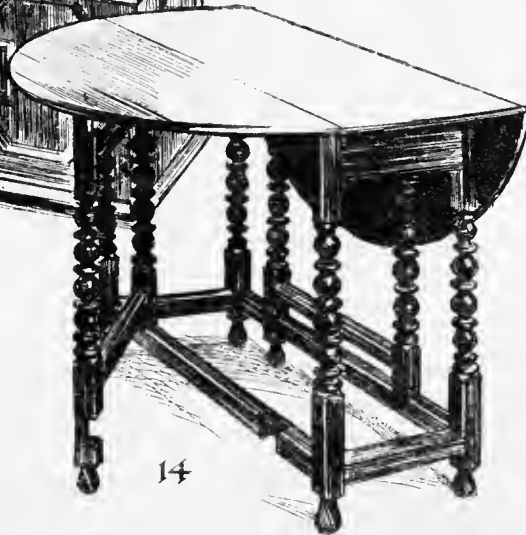
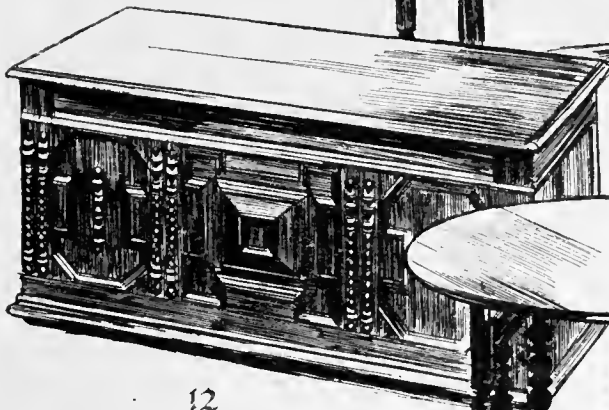
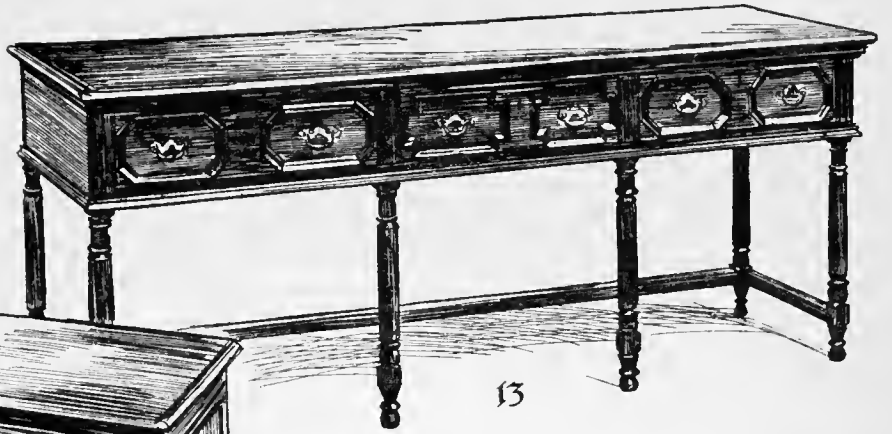


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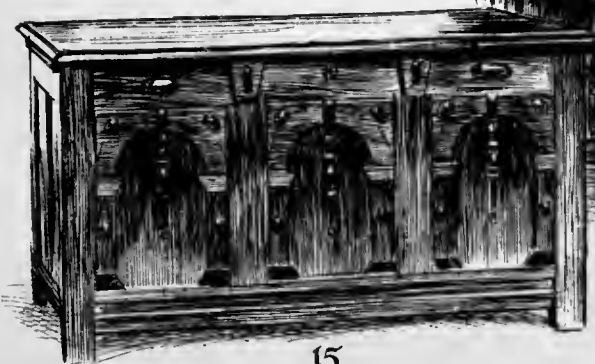
TUDOR AND STUART

SOLID OAK AND WALNUT FURNITURE

12. A more elaborate and later specimen of the same decoration applied to the front of a dower-chest, showing the spindles introduced between the panelling. These long, low chests were very usual pieces of furniture, and were originally made to contain the bride's linen, which on her marriage was provided by her parents.
13. These side tables were often surmounted by a tier of shelves for plates and cups, and were thus developed into the dresser. Plain ones are very common, having been made in large numbers for the better sort of farmhouse.
14. An early and very characteristic gate table, of which the side legs fold inwards, allowing two flaps to fall down so that it can be placed out of the centre of the room. These tables were made during 100 years, and succeeded those of the type of sketch 2.
15. Another, and more unusual, dower-chest; the raised spindles and oval beads are in bog oak.
16. A Court cupboard, a style of buffet made from the time of Elizabeth to that of Charles II. The lower part consists of cupboards, the centre of the upper forming another, whilst the two sides are angled off leaving a space in which pieces of silver can be shown. The frieze has a characteristic nulled carving. The handles and hinges are of iron. These are rare, though an immense number have been made out of other pieces of old oak, such as beds and chests. A great many expensively got up sideboards of so-called Elizabethan and Stuart times, many of them with very elaborate panelled doors and carved backs, were also made during the Abbotsford Gothic rage at the beginning of the late Queen's reign, but these are generally built like a regular pedestal Victorian sideboard, and are not in the least like any genuine old buffet.



M. B. Rook



16

15

M. B. Rook

TUDOR AND STUART SOLID OAK AND WALNUT FURNITURE

17. Two very charming examples of the cane-back type of chair. These chairs, which are one of the most successful seats ever invented, were probably first introduced during the reign of Charles I. It is said that those which bear a crown were made for cavaliers, just as the Sheraton chairs of 1780, carved with the ostrich plume, were ordered by gentlemen of the party of the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV. The earlier chairs were, like those shown on this plate, broader in proportion to their height than they afterwards became. The best are in walnut, the least pleasing in oak and pear. The former have become a lovely bronze colour, and from the nature of the wood have much softer and finer carving.



17

H. B. ROUAC

TUDOR AND STUART SOLID OAK AND WALNUT FURNITURE

18. A small and very unusual walnut table. Its date is about 1680. The legs have the same shape as the very typical chair 19, but the tie is of a rather later style.
19. Two more carved walnut chairs, both showing the diversity of treatment and the individual drawing which was lavished on these things, and which accounts for their long-continued popularity.



18



19



MERCK

TUDOR AND STUART SOLID OAK AND WALNUT FURNITURE

20. A carved walnut day-bed. This piece of furniture formed the sofa of the Jacobean time. The back was usually made to fall back between the two uprights so that it could be adjusted for the comfort of the user, chains and pegs being supplied so that it could be fixed at any angle. In the best of these there is a carved bottom rail on both sides. They were made matching the chairs of the date, but are not very common. In the succeeding age this form of couch was replaced by settees of both the chair and stuffed-back types, but the sofa disappeared until almost modern times. In only one instance have I ever met with a day-bed or chaise longue of late type, and this was a very early specimen of spoon-back—William and Mary.
21. Another early, though not so early, easy chair as the grandfather one already shown in this section. In this example the head-rests remain, but the chair has already developed in the direction it ultimately took, although here the back and sides only are padded, and the piece in other respects, save in amplitude, differs little from the ordinary cane-back arm.
22. A cane-back chair of later date, and probably contemporary with much of the furniture of the Dutch type. The back and seat are narrower, and the former has become much higher. The centre panel has assumed a form more approaching that of the spoon-back, though the rest of the chair still retains the features of the Stuart walnut chair.
23. This table belongs more to the succeeding period of the Dutch influence. The same design is often found as the base both of chests of drawers and cabinets of that date. The curious bell-shaped ornaments in the legs are specially features of the later style.
24. A curious small oak gate table with one flap and one leg. The top is inlaid with sycamore of simple geometrical design.



HMS ROCK

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21



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23



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HMS ROCK

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH
INFLUENCE

THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER
WORK, 1670 TO 1710

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE

THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK, 1670 TO 1710

AS already explained, the furniture made up to the middle of the reign of Charles II. had for decorative effect been chiefly dependant on carving or panelling. About 1670 a style was introduced, mainly from Holland, of veneered furniture, which allowed colour, in addition to form, to be largely made use of. At first the plain surfaces were inlaid, as in Continental work, with marquetry of the richest description, in which stained ivory and coloured woods were introduced to form bird and floral designs, more or less natural. A great deal of this furniture is extremely Dutch in character, but can be distinguished from foreign work by its construction and by the superiority of its finish. Occasionally transition pieces are met with in which the raised panels of the old decoration are filled with a marquetry design, but these are rare, and on the whole it would appear as though the ornate Dutch style was introduced full-fledged into this country, actually displacing the older work. The intimate connection between the Courts of London and The Hague in the reign of Charles II. would, of course, amply account for the remarkable invasion of this new influence, especially as the day of the panel decoration had lasted long, and the style had been exploited in every possible direction.

About 1700 the quieter English taste began to assert itself, and the style of ornament became simpler. Panels of delicate and fine scroll work on surfaces of cross-cut walnut or laburnum, so arranged as to produce oyster or shell design, took the place of the more ornate marquetry. Many of the cabinets and escritaires of this description are very happy in their tone of colour, and produce somewhat the general effect of fine old leather work. During nearly the whole of this time a certain amount of carved furniture was still made, but all of it belonged, though it was slightly modified by the prevailing fashion, more to the preceding age. The beautiful cane-back chair seemed specially unwilling to yield to its stiff Dutch spoon-back rival, and some of these late specimens, very

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE

(THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK, 1670 TO 1710)

high in the back and very gracefully curved, are amongst the best English chairs ever made.

Of this date, and partaking mainly of the later forms of it, is a very interesting and quaint furniture of lac, in close imitation of the then newly-imported Chinese and Japanese work, but in the shapes of the furniture, and in the features of the men and women depicted, clearly showing it to be of European make. This, aiming, like the marquetry, at a rich colour effect, was made with red, green and black grounds, with the designs in raised dull gold or yellow. Very little of this lacquer occurs in the succeeding period, but it was revived in a less successful way by Sheraton when the cabinet-makers were again seeking in every direction for colour effect.

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE

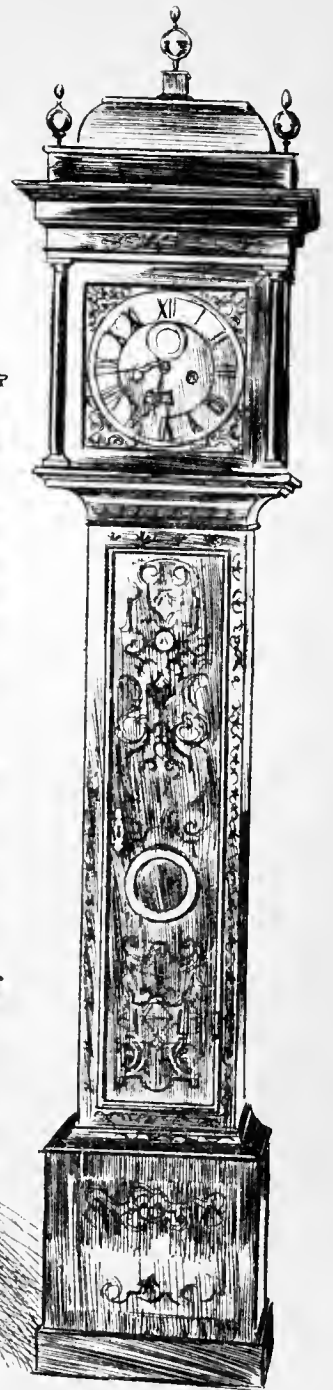
THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK

1670 TO 1710

25. The cabinet shown in this sketch is a striking example of the very Dutch character of the first marquetry made in this country. The form is rather clumsy, and the base is of the Continental type. The ground work of the marquetry is black, and the subject is worked up in a very rich and varied way with coloured woods and stained ivory, all of which is like the best foreign work. The panels, however, are distinctly English in feeling, the detail being smaller than in Dutch work, and the finish remarkably good. In the sides, as well as in the front, are inlaid marquetry panels.
26. A remarkably fine clock, placed beside this cabinet to show the modification which occurred, as already explained, in the later English marquetry. The maker of this clock, Esaye Fleurian, lived in the reign of Queen Anne. The inlay in the case is made of close-grained yellow sycamore on a ground of sycamore of different grain, the design being brought out clearly by fine engraving, only the bolder and stronger lines being emphasised by different woods of darker colour. The general effect of this treatment is very successful.

In all this later marquetry the greater part of the design is worked out in only two-coloured woods. In some the ground is light and the pattern dark, and these have the richer effect; in others the ground is light and the design in darker wood, just as in the contemporary French Buhl furniture one piece had the design in brass and the ground in tortoiseshell, whilst in the fellow it was reversed. There is, in fact, a very general resemblance between this later marquetry and the contemporary French Buhl. In the English the effect is produced by contrasted woods, in the French by tortoiseshell and brass, and in both little points in the design are brought out by pieces of more richly coloured inlay.

27. The chair here shown is of the later period, about 1705. The front of the frame and the legs have a raised shell carved on them. The back is inlaid with a panel of the Queen Anne marquetry.



H. B. ROGER

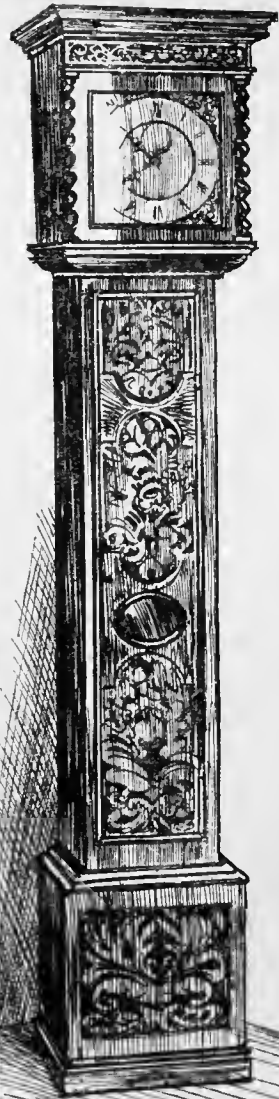
THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE
THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK
1670 TO 1710

28. A chest of drawers, a little later in date than the cabinet No. 25, made of walnut, inlaid with cedar and sycamore. The general colour is very rich. The drawers in this run on bearers in the modern way. The plinth jutting slightly out has a drawer in it, and is a characteristic feature of this period.
29. Another long-case or grandfather clock. These were first made in considerable numbers at this time. As in the chest of drawers here shown, the marquetry is placed in panels, an arrangement that was afterwards very generally abandoned for an all-over decoration of smaller designed inlay. The little corkscrew columns at each side of the face are very usual, also the glass-covered hole through which the pendulum could be seen.



28

J. M. R. & C.



29

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE

THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK

1670 TO 1710

30. This is a very perfect example of the late type of carved walnut and cane chair, made during the marquetry period. The back has an elegant curve in it, precisely like the solid spoon-back chair, its contemporary, whilst the double-arched top is a familiar Queen Anne shape in bureaus and other pieces of furniture. The carving in this chair is marvellously refined, and the effect as a whole most beautiful.



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H.B.
6

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE

THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK

1670 TO 1710

31. An early spoon-back chair made of plain highly-figured walnut. The high back, the narrow splat, the shaped tie, all show it to be nearer the later cane-back chairs with which it was almost, if not quite, contemporary than the later examples given a little further on. The slight raised plain moulding and the scalloping of the bottom of the frame are characteristic features found both in chairs and tables of this time. This chair is a little earlier than chair No. 27.
32. A gate table of late date. It shows the little fluted foot so often found on the late cane chairs, and which is called the Spanish toe, having, it is said, been introduced by the Braganza marriage. This table is in mahogany, and is interesting as a very early example in that wood. It is dark in colour and extraordinarily heavy. It is curious that mahogany, though it must have been known from the early days of the discovery of America, only made its way into general use from 1700 onwards.



31



32

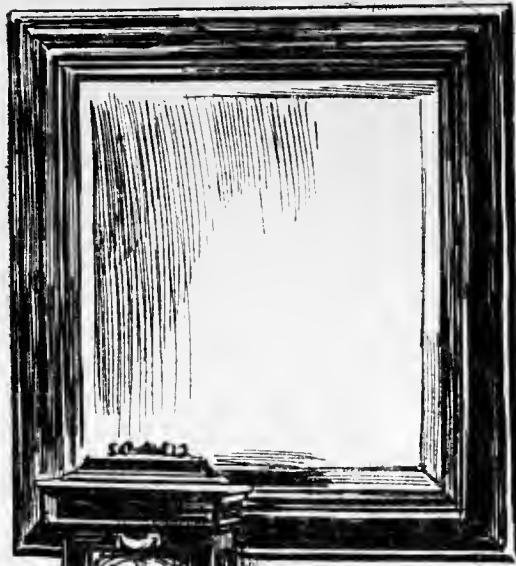
HMS ROCK
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THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE

THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK

1670 TO 1710

33. A chest of drawers on corkscrew stand, veneered with walnut, cut across the grain to form an oyster pattern, and with freehand scroll of boxwood with the original brass drop handles, about 1688. These chests on stands were the beginning of the so-called tall-boys or double chests.
34. A small Queen Anne bracket clock. These clocks were made with ebony, ebonized, or walnut cases. The faces were silvered and had brass-chased corner-pieces with cherubs, heads and wings. The names of many of the makers of both these and long-case clocks were duly registered at the Clock-Makers' Company in the City of London, and in this way can be accurately dated. Clock cases thus often form valuable evidence as to the date of similar cabinet work in other pieces of furniture.
35. A typical plain walnut mirror of this date. Similar mirrors were made inlaid with marquetry matching the other furniture of this time, and many of them with fine scalloped capes at the top.



34

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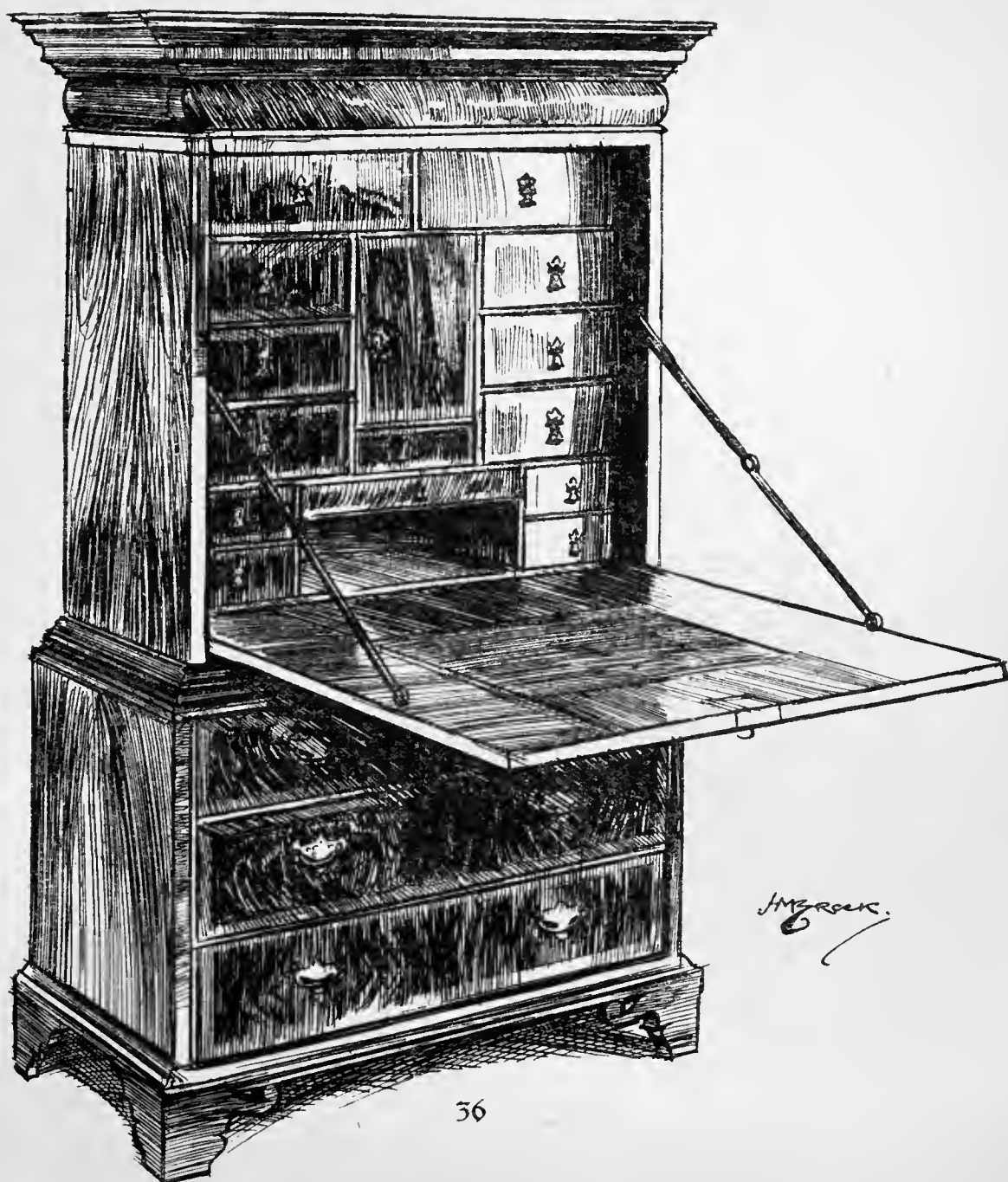


35

AMBROSE
6

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE
THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK
1670 TO 1710

36. The earliest form of English writing bureau. The lower part consisted of four drawers, the upper of a nest of drawers with a small cupboard in the centre enclosed by a flap which let down and formed a writing desk. This part was surmounted by an ovolo frieze, which pulled out as a drawer, and finally by a simple cornice. These bureaus were often furnished with a number of secret places which, in the absence of iron safes, were used to hide away valuables. The bureau here depicted is a quite simple one of figured walnut, the drawers only decorated with a banding of herring-bone inlay. The rounded mouldings between the drawers are very characteristic. The same type of bureau was made with tree, bird and flower, the Chinese and the feather marquetry. After the Dutch period this form of desk disappears in England, though in France and Holland it continued to be made, successively adapting itself to the various styles which became fashionable. As it would have been equally well rendered in Chippendale and Sheraton work, and is one of the most compact and useful pieces of furniture ever made, it is difficult to account for its disappearance in this country.



J.M. ROUX.

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE

THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK

1670 TO 1710

37. This bureau, surmounted by an enclosed cupboard for books, is a very good example of the kind which displaced the one shown in No. 36, and is the direct ancestor of the Hanoverian and Sheraton bookcase bureau. The lower part, consisting of drawers with a flap turning back and resting on slides pulled out on either side, was often made without any top. In the earlier specimens like the one shown the doors were almost always fitted with hand bevelled mirrors. Below these doors two candle rests pull out, and inside are fittings to take ledgers, with small drawers and pigeon holes for papers. The curious broken arch pediment is very typical of this date. These pediments were very varied, and not infrequently simply follow the double arch of the doors.
38. A walnut chair, which shows the gradual alteration which such chairs underwent from those previously shown. The shoulder of the leg is carved with a shell, and the well-known claw-and-ball foot gives the design a fully Queen Anne character.



37.



38

J.M. Brock

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE
THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK
1670 TO 1710

39. A typical Queen Anne granny chair of walnut with cabriole legs, with carved shell on the knee ; the frame upholstered all over, but shaped in the usual Queen Anne style.
40. A late dining room chair of this date, approximating to the Hogarth drawing ; very dignified and handsome.
41. A very typical walnut arm-chair, about 1700.



39



40



H. G. ...

41

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE
THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK
1670 TO 1710

42. A simple walnut dressing table of the very close of this period, probably about 1710, with mirror of the same date. The early dressing tables were all quite small.
43. A very unusual inlaid four-post bed. The pillars of this bed are formed of delicate and fine marquetry, in which ebony and coloured woods are freely used.



43

H. B. ROCK
G

42

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE
THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK
1670 TO 1710

44. A fine walnut chest of drawers, the panels inlaid with pollard elm, outlined with boxwood. The decoration of this piece is one of the many instances in which curious panels of English wood have been introduced for the purpose of obtaining the desired richness of effect. During this period a great variety of colour and marking in the woods was necessary to the designs, and one of the most interesting and, at the same time, puzzling problems presented to the expert is to determine what the different inlays consist of. Laburnum, walnut, cedar, yew, box, olive and sycamore were all introduced, but to get still greater variety they sought out pollard forms, and cut them in all kinds of cross sections. It can easily be imagined that these, even when not stained, as they often were, and after the dirt and varnish of two centuries have been carefully removed are not easy to identify. Another point to be observed in this work is the great difference in the nicety with which the inlay is cut, some having true and clean, some wide joints, whilst the drawing in the designs is also of very unequal merit. The veneer is nearly all on deal, and for this reason has, on the whole, stood remarkably well, as soft wood is much less liable to twist and warp than oak. These chests, with stands, were probably made for reception rooms, being extremely decorative in colour and drawing.

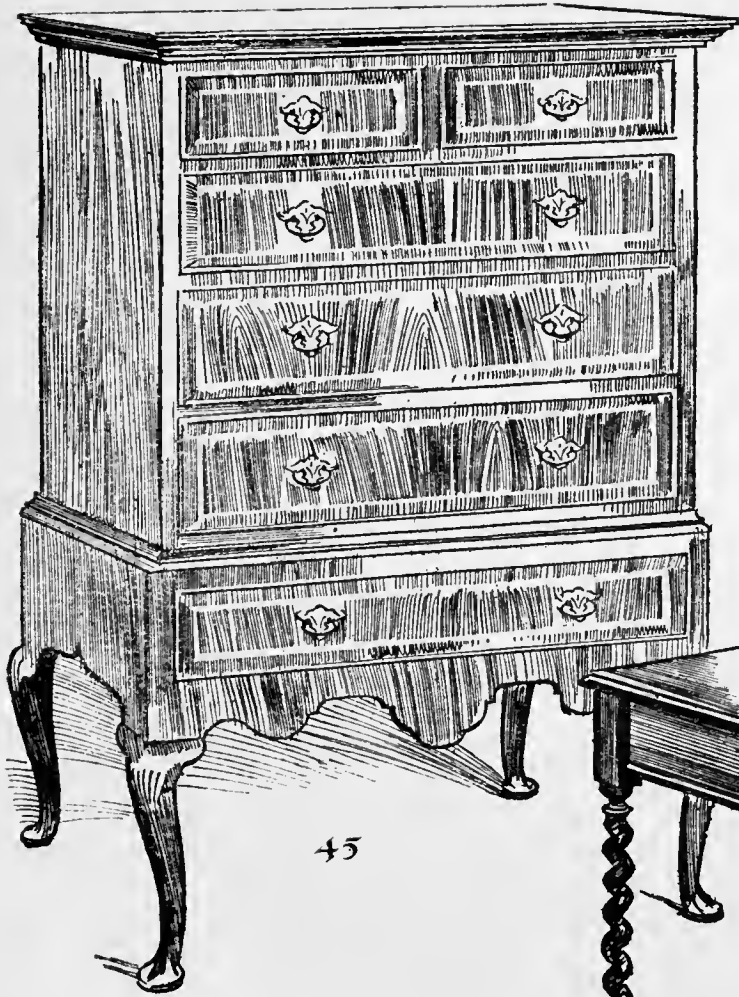


H. Brock

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THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE
THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK
1670 TO 1710

45. Another form of tall-boy or double chest of drawers, made of finely-figured walnut, banded with herring-bone inlay and standing on cabriole legs, with carved shells on the knee, and with spud feet; date William and Mary to Queen Anne.
46. A small walnut table, with four corkscrew legs and X-shaped stretcher. These tables were made in great variety, and superb specimens are occasionally met with inlaid in every type of marquetry work. The earlier ones have corkscrew legs like the one shown here, but much heavier and in dark wood with bird and flower inlaid tops, whilst others have the scroll supports shown in the stand of Cabinet No. 47.



45



46

J.M. ROSE
6

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE

THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK

1670 TO 1710

47. A beautiful and characteristic cabinet of the culminating and most English period of this marquetry work. The upper portion consists of small drawers and a cupboard enclosed within two large doors, and surmounted by the usual Queen Anne ovolo frieze and cornice. The base is a table, with three drawers in the frame supported on curious scroll legs, with shaped tie. The whole surface of the doors and drawers is veneered with walnut, cut in cross section and forming a kind of shell design. On this surface are panels of sycamore inlaid with walnut in a delicate feather design. Age has given to the whole piece a most harmonious tone of mingled tawny browns and yellows. Such pieces are rare and valuable, and make it surprising that a style so beautiful and unlike any other went out of favour so completely and quickly.

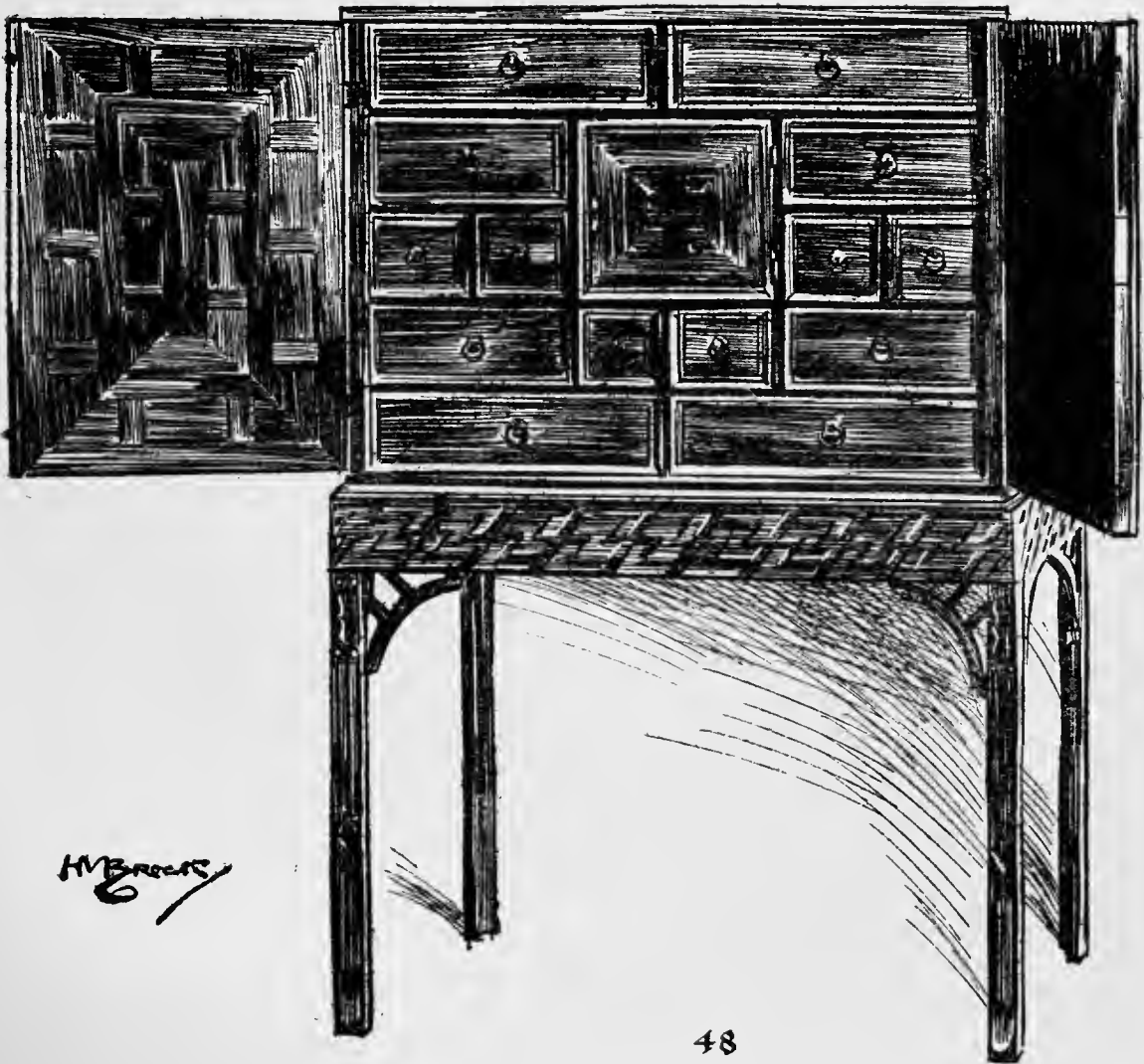


47

H. B. R. O. C. K.

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE
THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK
1670 TO 1710

48. Another and unusual example of the many cabinets of this date. This piece, which is made of rosewood veneer, cut in transverse sections, has much that is Chinese in its character. It has been selected as an example of the influence of that country long previous to Chippendale's time. The fret carving on the stand and legs is a more exact copy of an Oriental design than it would have been in the later period. The cabinet has two doors, which open and display an arrangement of drawers with little drop brass handles.



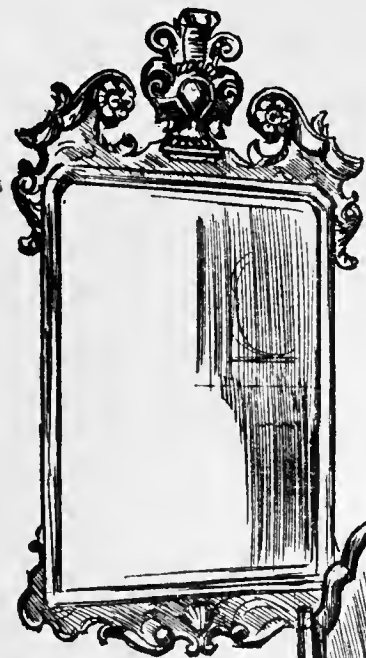
H. B. Brooks
6

THE PERIOD OF DUTCH INFLUENCE

THE FIRST ENGLISH VENEER WORK

1670 TO 1710

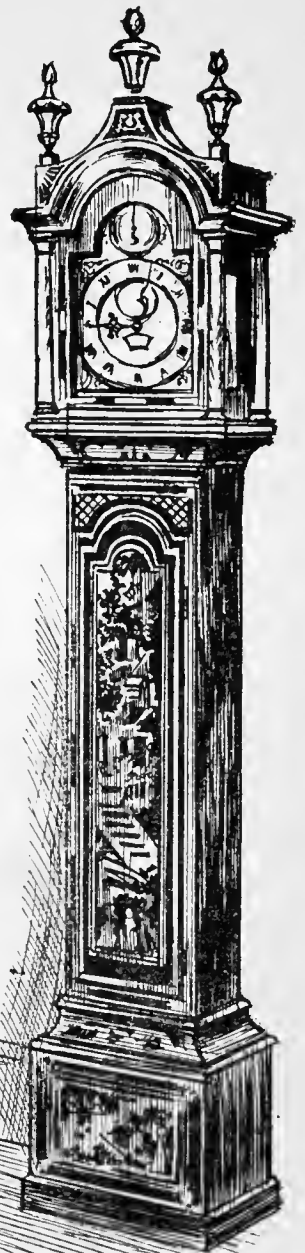
49. A gilt mirror, belonging in many respects more to the early Hanoverian type.
50. A simple Queen Anne walnut dressing table, with plain cabriole legs ending in pad feet. The shaping of the bottom frame of this table is very characteristic.
51. A toilet mirror of dark green English lac. The raised decoration is in dull gold. The insides of the drawers are painted a pinkish vermilion, a favourite colour at this date both to line in silk or paint the interiors of drawers and boxes.
52. A corner cupboard of dark lac, with raised dull gold decoration. The form of this cupboard, especially the broken arch, is markedly English and Queen Anne, whilst the pictures are intended to represent Chinese figures and landscapes, though the faces are quite European in type. These corner cupboards were also made in walnut, often with pediments resembling those on the bureaux, and in almost all cases they were made with panelled or mirrored doors.
53. A grandfather clock of similar lac decoration, but of rather later date—probably 1730. As in the corner cupboard, there is the Chinese intention carried out in the English manner.



49



52



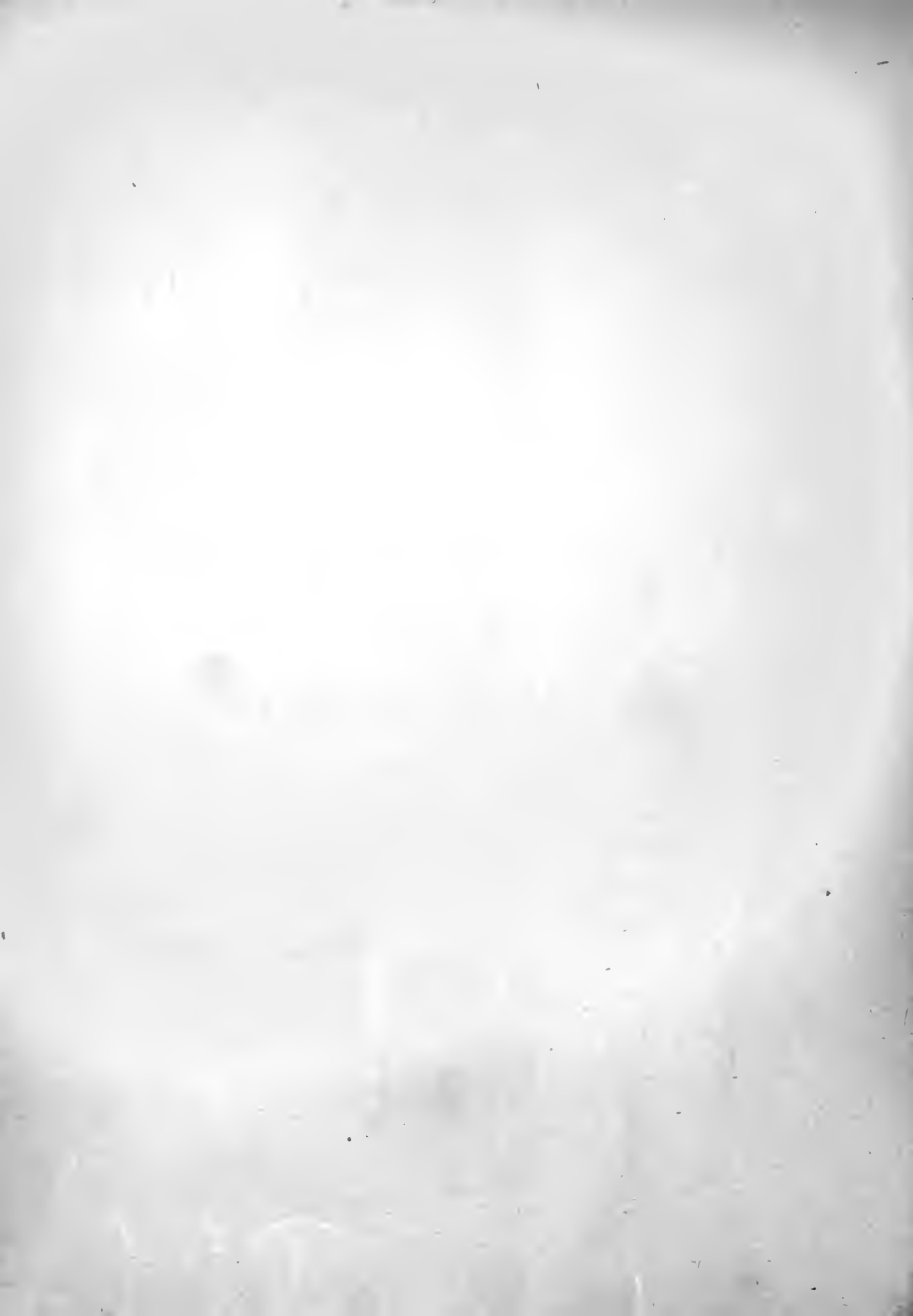
53



51

50

M. Z. ROBERT



THE EARLY HANOVERIAN
PERIOD

I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH,
1715 TO 1750

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH

1715 TO 1750

THE style which succeeded that of the Dutch influence falls naturally into two sub-divisions. The first I have called the Hogarth period, because the greater part of it was contemporary with that painter's career and is so largely illustrated in his works, whilst it was not coincident with any one reign and was not, like its successor, identified with the name of one maker of special note.

It is almost the most beautiful and satisfactory in the whole history of English furniture. It began in the earliest years of the eighteenth century, and was evolved very gradually from the preceding style, many of the forms in use in the reign of Anne penetrating far into that of George II. Probably the importation of mahogany for the first time in large quantities was the main factor in the change which took place. The veneered furniture of Anne had not really shown any falling off, but on the contrary only attained in its later phases its greatest excellence, but it was unsuited to mahogany. The earliest variety of this wood introduced was close grained and heavy, of a rich dark bronze colour, showing little flash or grain. For this reason it was soon found that designs, admirably suited to the variegated surface of English walnut, looked heavy and ineffective in this medium, and as the new wood more and more grew in fashion, the cabinet makers began to resort to lighter forms, to carving and to piercing to get a pleasing effect, breaking up all the parts so as to avoid the heavy appearance of an expanse of dark plain spaces. It is only necessary to look at the sketch of a Queen Anne fall-down writing bureau (No. 36) to see how bad would be the effect of such a piece made in a wood with a dark uniform surface, instead of in a piece of highly-feathered walnut or laburnum. No better example of this can be given than in the designs made for chairs. At first the spoon-backs, handed on from the previous period, were little altered save that for variety they were made lower and broader and given a little more decoration,

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH, 1715 TO 1750

but presently the makers began to divide up these plain backs with piercing and carving, as in the magnificent design of the settee shown (No. 68), and this process continued, the forms gradually getting lighter, but through all this first Hanoverian time maintaining their strong, liberal breadth of drawing.

In other pieces of furniture the same change took place, the designs becoming more varied. Thus, both tables and chairs were made with cabriole legs, sometimes finished with claw-and-ball, sometimes with scroll feet, the shoulders being decorated with carved shells or acanthus leaf. Bureaus with panelled or mirrored tops had been introduced in the latter part of Anne's reign. These earlier ones were made to hold account books and papers, and with innumerable secret drawers. At first the Hogarth secretaires had the same construction, but soon the tops were made into bookcases with diaper glass doors. The curious and very beautiful pediments adorning most of these in Anne's reign continued almost throughout the Hogarth period, though towards the close these bureaus gradually assumed plainer forms until they merged into the type they maintained to the end of the century. An enormous variety of mirrors, many very beautiful, are met with, all showing the same strong drawing as the other furniture of this date, and differing more widely from the light, floral style which those of the Chippendale period exhibit, than they do from the previous later mirrors of Queen Anne. Many of the designs showed a certain French influence just as did the silver work made at the same time by Courtauld and Paul de Lamerie, very probably for the same reason, namely, that the makers were the sons and grandsons of men expelled by the Edict of Nantes. The French-sounding surname of Giles Grendet, which was found by my firm on a label attached to the under frame of a fine library chair of French type, dating about 1735, with the very English address, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell, is an interesting indication of this. Again, the settee (No. 68), already referred to, shows in both design and execution the same feeling as the silver work of Paul de Lamerie. Indeed, if many of the fine commodes of Louis XV. were executed in old Spanish mahogany, instead of being decorated, inlaid, and mounted with ormolu, the similar character of the design, with that of English work of this date, would be very striking.

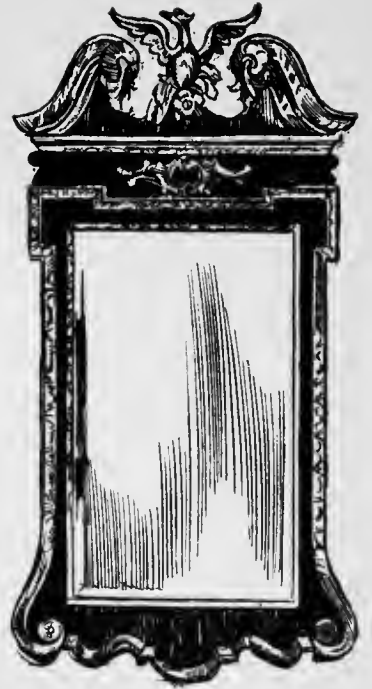
THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH

1715 TO 1750

54. A library or dining room chair of the latest type of spoon-back, which might with equal propriety be classed as either of the Anne or Hogarth period. This chair is made in the early heavy mahogany, and for that reason is probably as late as 1720.
55. A very characteristic claw-and-ball card table, about 1745; the shoulder carved in rather a French feeling. The earlier tables of this sort had often two flaps, one covered in cloth, with scooped pools for the counters, and with places at the corners for the drinking glasses, or possibly for the candlesticks; the upper flap bare mahogany.
56. A mahogany grandfather clock, dating about 1750. The cases of these clocks had, by this date, become much higher. The dials show the phases of the moon. The wood is dark and rich in colour, without inlay, and the case depends for its effect on the general form and on the mouldings. The only relief is given by the little pinnacles, which are dead gilt.
57. A very characteristic mirror of brown walnut (leather coloured), with bandings, broken arch, and bird in carved dull gold. These were made from 1700 to 1750, or even later. The more exact date can usually be determined by the style of the pediment.

56



57



54.



55

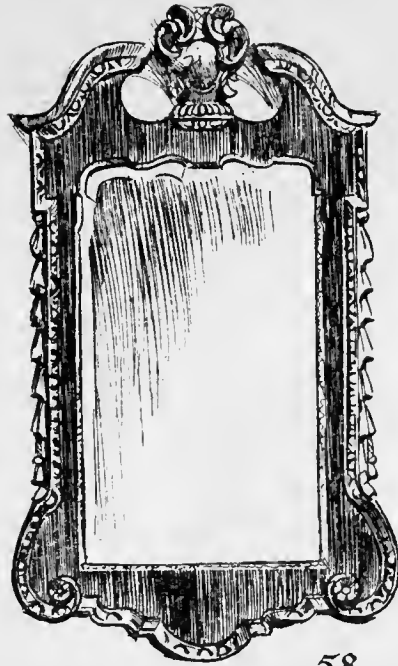
J. M. ROCK
6

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH

1715 TO 1750

58. A mirror of the same date and style, and which shows another of the curious broken arch pediments so much used in the later Queen Anne and the earlier Hanoverian furniture.
59. A cabriole leg claw-and-ball settee with padded back and ends, dating about 1750. Many curious shaped settees had been made previous to this, those about 1700 very generally having high backs, covered with fine tapestry or needlework, and with the legs connected, like the chairs, with shaped wooden rails.
60. An early form of card table. The back leg turns out, and the top flap turns over and forms a table, or, at discretion, both lift, and thus form the lid of a box, made by the frame of the table, to keep cards or a cloth in. For this reason they are called box-tables. The one shown has the pointed hind-foot found in so much of the walnut furniture, but it is made in the early dark mahogany, the date probably being about 1718. These tables were not covered with cloth.



58



59

60

AMBROSE
6

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH

1715 TO 1750

61. This plate shows three typical corner writing chairs. No. 61 is of walnut and belongs to the latest Queen Anne period. The shell on the shoulder, the pad foot, the bird arm, and the solid splats, are all true to the culmination of this style.
62. This is an equally true representative piece of Hogarth drawing. It is of dark mahogany.
63. This shows the final development of this corner chair, and displays every feature of Chippendale's invention—the fret carving on the legs, the elaboration of the splat and the elegant scroll of the tie. It would be difficult to choose three better examples to illustrate the gradual change of taste, and each are so excellent of their kind that they may be safely taken as fair specimens of their respective styles.



61



62



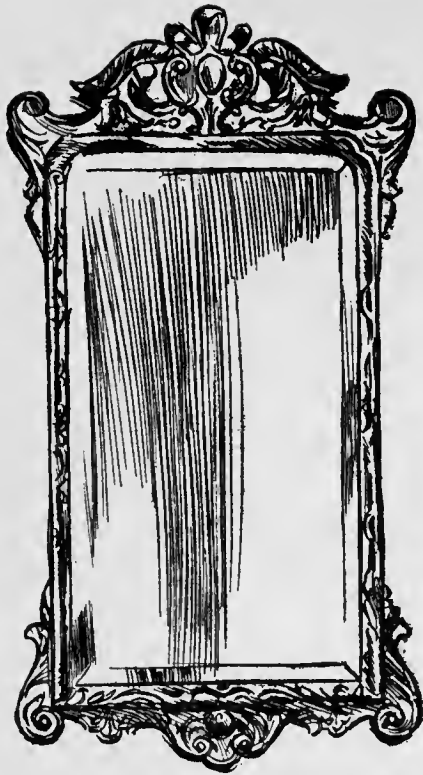
H. M. ...
63

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH

1715 TO 1750

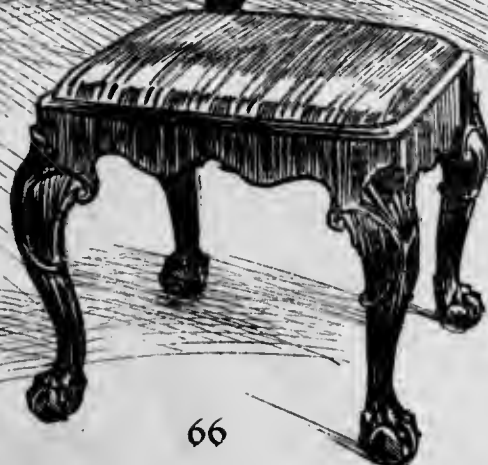
64. An all-gilt mirror. The drawing in this frame is very typical of the Hogarth period. There is a strong and solid touch about it which differentiates it completely from the light Chippendale mirrors which succeeded them. Much of the ornament is raised in relief, and there is comparatively little work in it.
65. A so-called chair-back settee. This form of couch was made, though very rarely, in the earlier walnut period, but towards the end of Anne's reign and throughout the early Hanoverian period they became very important and beautiful pieces of furniture. The one here shown is of walnut. The carving of the birds on the back is effective, the arms are gracefully shaped, and the cabriole legs with the carved shells, the curious little anklet and the claw-and-ball feet should be noticed.
66. An early stool, of about the same or earlier date than settee 65. These stools were made, though none have been shown in our illustrations, from the Stuart period, and are often fine and interesting pieces, bearing all the characteristic decoration of the chairs with which they were contemporary.
67. A tripod table, of dark mahogany. These tables were one of the most useful additions made to the reception rooms at this period. They admit of great beauty of design both in the tray and the tripod. The specimen shown has the shaped edge borne by the silver salver of the years 1720 to 1740, and is undoubtedly a piece of that date.



64



65



66



67

H. Brooks

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH

1715 TO 1750

68. Another chair-back settee. This sumptuous and beautiful piece of furniture is as interesting in its detail as it is lovely to look at. It is made of dark bronze-coloured mahogany. The splats, which still retain a certain spoon-back feeling, are carved in high relief in a way which suggests the idea that they might have been cast. The scrolls at the side of each splat are wonderfully managed, and the masks on the shoulders and at the ends of the arms are most successful. The seat is covered with old tapestry. This piece is strikingly like the finest silver-work contemporary with it, both in design and in execution. The date is probably 1730.
69. A solid dark mahogany chair of the finest type of design and work. The curious fan-shaped back is very effective, and the bold cabriole legs carved on the shoulder are decidedly French in feeling. They are covered with black horse-hair, the backs are spliced and veneered in a manner to give great strength, and the scrolls are partly carved from the solid and partly applied.
70. A very beautiful tripod table of dark bronze-coloured mahogany, with a raised, pierced and carved rim round the top. The tripod legs and pillar are boldly carved and fluted, and the piece, like the two others on this plate, represent the finest type of English furniture at its best.



68

69

70

69

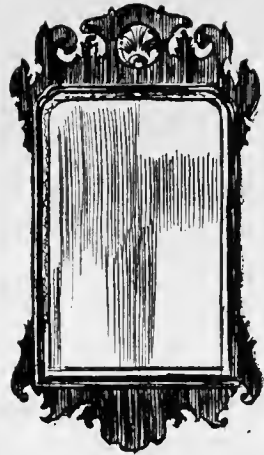
J. Beck

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH

1715 TO 1750

71. A characteristic Hogarth dining room chair, showing the form finally evolved from its spoon-back predecessor. Good chairs like these were made in immense variety, and are some of the most practical and desirable ever produced.
72. A simple typical chair-back settee, of about 1750. The lighter and more open back shows this to be of rather later date than the chair shown on the same plate. Many of these settees have been made up from two chairs put together, but such altered pieces can be detected, as in the original settees the backs were larger and broader than those of chairs, and are therefore in much better proportion to the piece.
73. A little mahogany stand, with an open ring at the top to take a basin, with two triangular drawers below, and at the bottom a tray to hold a bottle or jug. These pieces of furniture are very common. Some consider them to have been made for powdering tables, but they were probably simply washstands. They are pretty and elegant, and have been generally promoted to the drawing room to hold flowers or to act as small lamp stands.
74. A characteristic mahogany mirror. The frame is entirely dark mahogany, with the exception of the gilded ornament in the hole at the top, and of a narrow carved and gilded band next the glass. The turned-in corner at the top is a very usual shape, about 1735.



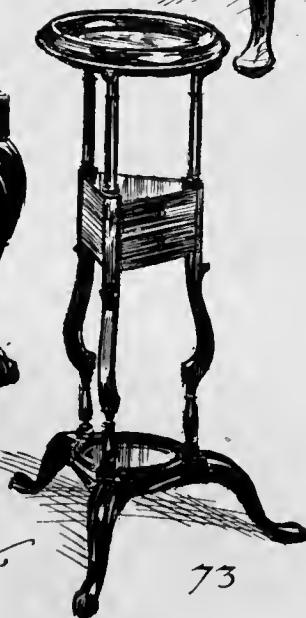
74



72



71



73

J.M. ROCK

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH

1715 TO 1750

75. Two characteristic patterns of Hogarth chairs.
76. A very typical Hogarth card table. These solid, round, upright legs, with the simple lappet on the shoulder, are found in various objects of furniture at this period, and are very satisfactory. The card table opens out with the so-called concertina arrangement, which obviates any person having a leg to sit at, and completes the frame all round, when the table is opened.



75

HMB Rocks



76



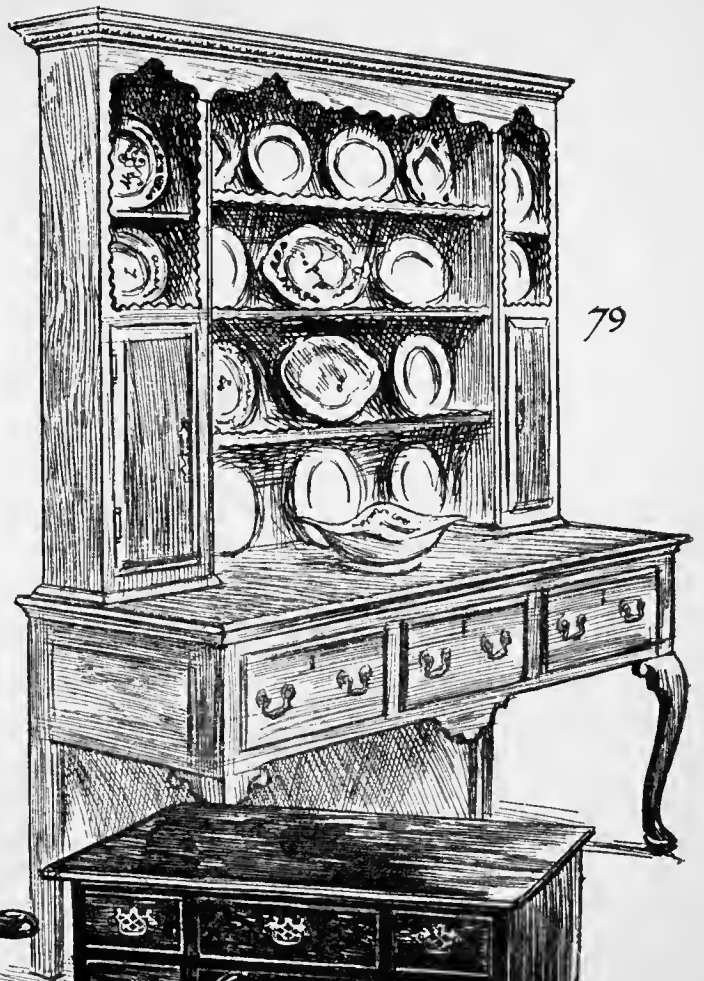
75

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH

1715 TO 1750

77. A fine plain arm-chair with a plain wooden seat, shaped like the so-called Windsor chairs, to which it bears a certain resemblance.
78. A small mahogany side table or dressing table, of very dark solid wood, with the later type of brass handles.
79. A Welsh dresser, of oak. These were made during many years, and are effective pieces for the display of plate or china.



79



78

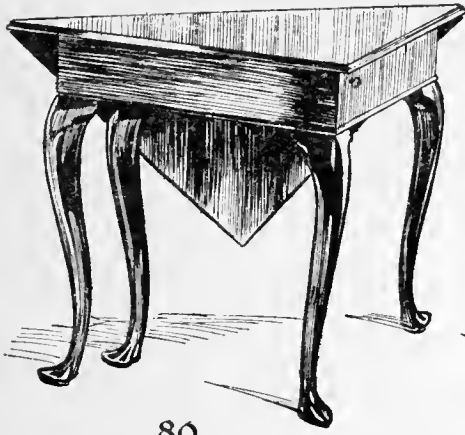
JMB rock 77

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

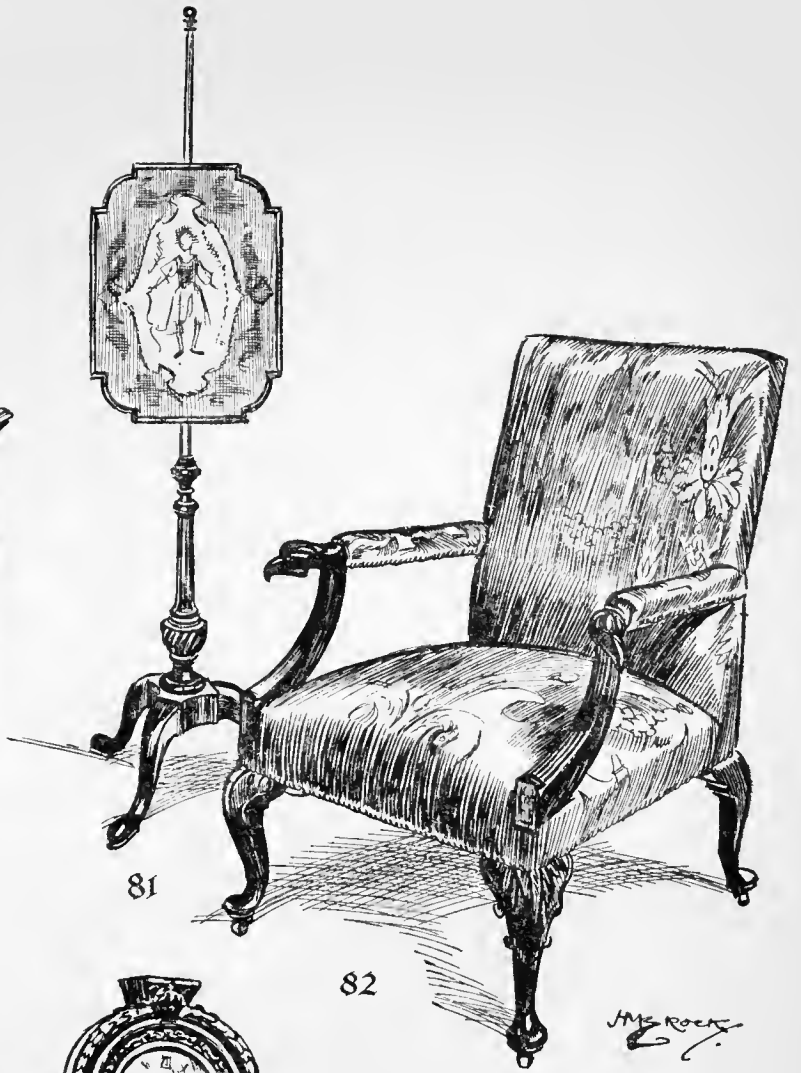
I.—THE TIME OF HOGARTH

1715 TO 1750

80. A three-cornered table, of dark mahogany ; another variety of the box table, shown in sketch 60. These are generally larger, and are, of course, square when opened, and make excellent tea tables, the box serving to hold the cloth.
81. A characteristic pole-screen of this date. These were made in this and the succeeding periods in great variety. Large and small folding screens were also produced, though not in equal number, until Chippendale began to copy the Chinese screens, which from Anne's time onwards had been largely imported.
82. A fine arm-chair, of dark mahogany. Stuffed chairs of this and similar type were made in great variety, following like the winged or grandfather chair, the fashion of the rest of the furniture.
83. The pedestal writing table, shown on the sketch chosen for the frontispiece, is an exceptionally fine specimen of English furniture. It belongs to the Hogarth period, and there is a tradition that the desk was actually painted by that artist in the room in which it stood when purchased by my firm. The raised fret carving is very Chippendale in character, but both this and the applied carving on the panel are dull-gilded, a treatment unusual at the later date, but frequently met with in the best pieces of the Hogarth period. The secretaire is made of mahogany, but, with the lapse of years, this has acquired a tawny colour, blending finely with the old gold decoration.
84. The balloon clock standing on this table is probably somewhat later than the desk, but if this be so it must have been made specially for the same room. The festoons at the top, the banded wreath above the base, and the claw feet are gilded like the table. The carving is in high relief on a flat surface ; the dial, plain silver, bears the name of the maker, "I. Leroux, Charing Cross," who is known to have been in business from 1760 onwards, and very possibly at an earlier date.



80



81

82

M. B. ROCK
6



84



83

M. B. ROCK
6

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN
PERIOD

II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

Makers :

THOMAS CHIPPENDALE, 1754 T. JOHNSON, 1758 and 1761
EDWARDS AND DARLEY, 1754 INCE AND MAYHEW, 1760

THE work of Chippendale and his contemporaries belonged to and yet was very different from that of the Hogarth period. It was distinctly more conscious work, as he reproduced designs in different styles, what he terms his French, his Chinese, and his Gothic. All this has rather an artificial sound, but as he was a great designer most of his work bears a distinct and very high stamp, and when seen actually made, greatly excels the sketches in his book. He rather worked in a manner than copied slavishly, and some of his finest things, though they are Chinese or French in a sense, are nevertheless first, Chippendale. His book is easily accessible to everyone. In looking through it, one sees at once that the work which he produced was more fanciful than the strong dignified furniture made up to the time of the publication of his book. The legs of most of his tables and chairs, and especially of those which show most originality in design, are straight and upright, neither shaped nor tapered, whilst not a single specimen of the familiar Hogarthian claw-and-ball foot appears.

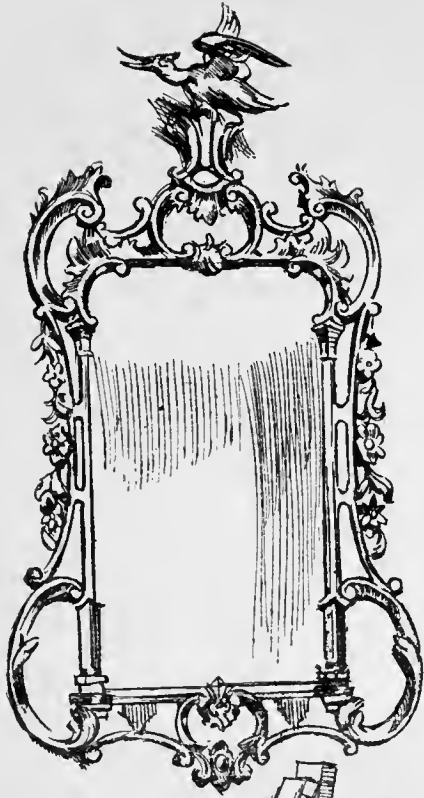
The most distinctive character of his design is the lavish use of fretted carving, and open pierced work as decoration, the former generally applied to the cornices of the larger pieces and to the frames of tables. Fine bureaux and bookcases are often, and very elaborate china cabinets of the type shown in No. 92, though rare, are occasionally, met with.

Doubtless, as Chippendale had been in business many years when his work was first published, a great deal of the furniture which he made in his younger days was of earlier Georgian type, but it seems convenient to confine his name to that peculiar and very different style which he himself originated, and which he very specially recommends as superior to the earlier designs he aimed at, and succeeded in replacing.

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

85. An all-gilt Chippendale mirror, with very characteristic style of carving. This glass well illustrates the great change in design between the earlier Georgian mirror and that produced by Chippendale.
86. This is a very fair sample of the writing desks which replaced the earlier form of bureau already described. They were first made about 1710, and grew in favour throughout the eighteenth century. The earlier ones had many secret drawers and hiding places, which were gradually omitted in the later. This bureau shows in the decoration round the centre part a little of Chippendale's favourite fret carving, and a slight indication of the inlay, which in the next period became such a marked feature.
87. The dining room chair, here shown, is a nice example of a good Chippendale chair, the earlier cabriole legs having disappeared, being replaced by solid straight ones.



85



86



87

JMB ROCK

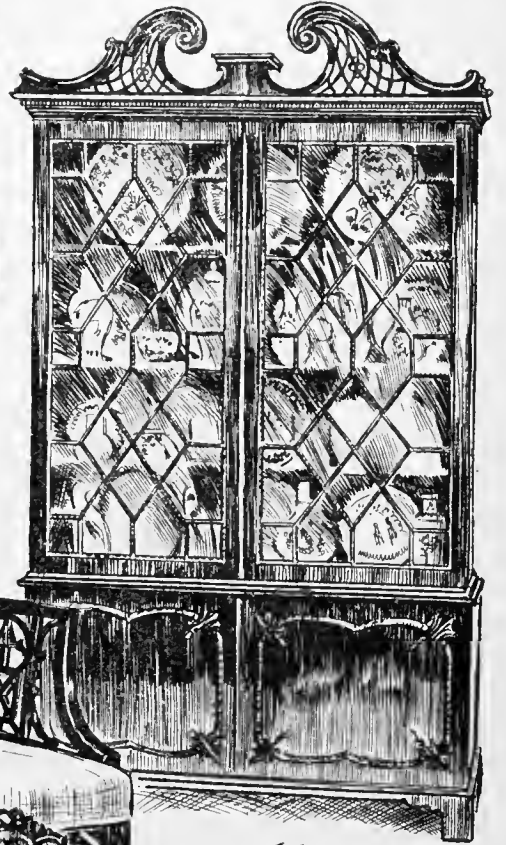
THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

88. A Chinese pattern double-back settee, a fine example of the best work made by Chippendale, and which, with the cabinet shown No. 92, will give a just appreciation of his adaptation of Eastern decoration to English furniture, and it bears out, I think, the favourable criticism, given in the introduction, of the admirable way in which this great designer made use of foreign material and inspiration in the creation of new designs.
89. A small urn stand. This is less Chinese in feeling. The pierced border, the tie between the legs, and the legs themselves are very pleasing.
90. The china cabinet or bookcase shown here is of equal merit with the other fine pieces on this plate. The pierced broken arch is graceful and strong in drawing, the diaper framing of the glass doors has every member beautifully carved with an egg and oval pattern often seen in old silver of this date, and the cupboard doors have applied carving of the first order. All these pieces are in a dark brown bronze-coloured mahogany.
91. A gilt Chippendale overmantel, carved with the fable of the fox and the grapes and surmounted by birds, shaped like those on old Worcester and Chelsea china. This is an important and unusual example of an English carved mirror, about 1750 to 1760.



91



90



88



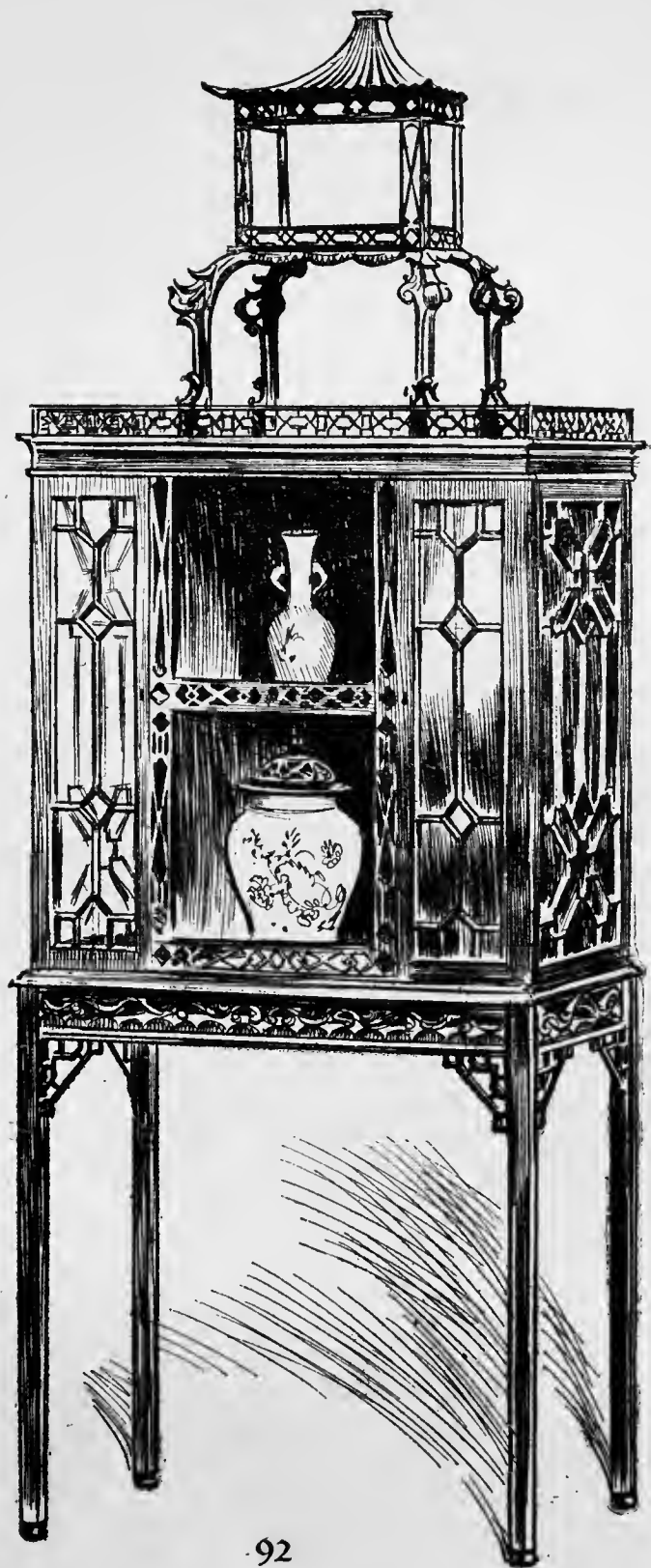
89

M. B. ROCK

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

92. One of a pair of most characteristic Chinese Chippendale cabinets. The pagoda roof, and the exquisitely light carved and pierced border round the top of this cabinet, give it a singularly graceful appearance. The wood is a dark rich mahogany showing very little grain. In Chippendale's book he displays many cabinets of this type, and they have been largely, though very unsuccessfully, reproduced; but genuine old ones are so extremely scarce that it is difficult to believe that many of them were actually made. The original of this drawing, though so light, had received hardly any injury during its long life, owing probably to the high estimation in which it had always been held.

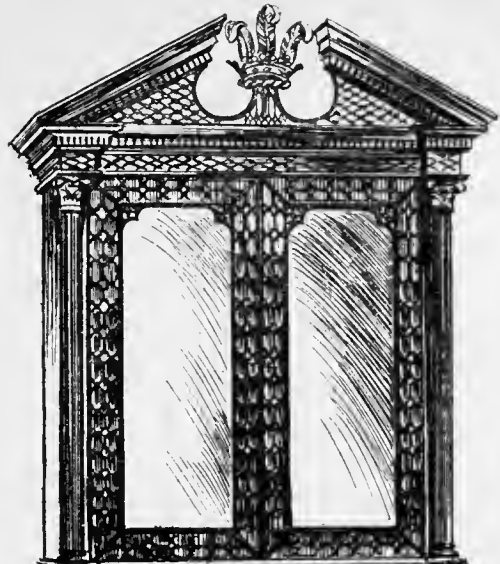


M.S.
6

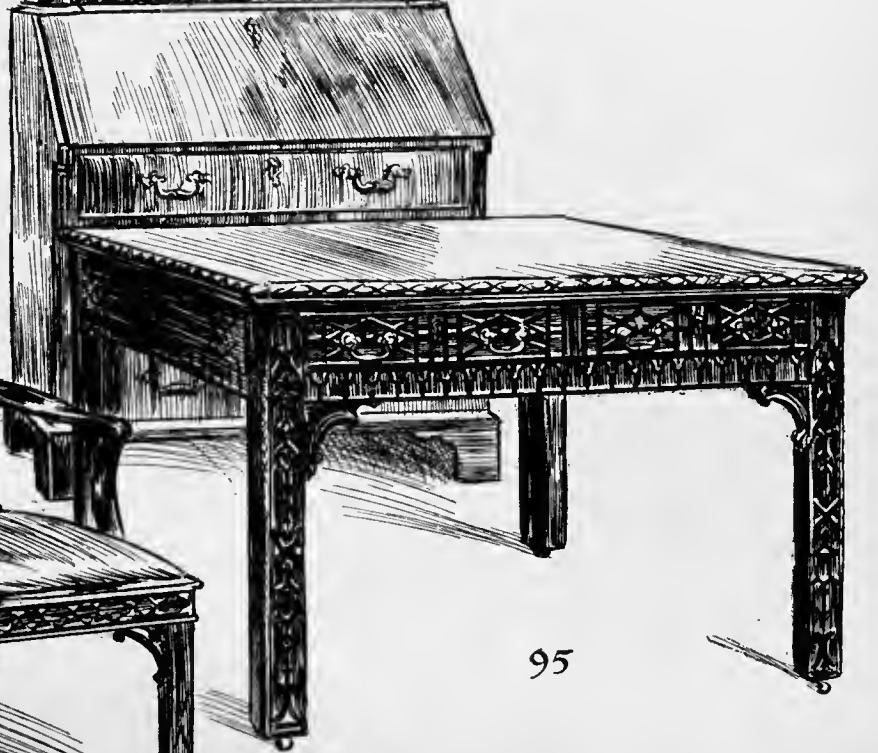
THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

93. This arm-chair is a fine specimen of characteristic Chippendale work. The fretted carving on the frame, and, to a certain extent, the splats of the back, are Gothic in design, yet the effect of the whole is quite different from and very superior to the poor, but slavish, imitation of Gothic work made about 1820.
94. This bureau is a most beautiful example of the style. The pierced work under the broken arch is particularly graceful and finely executed. The slight Corinthian columns and the carving on the panels of the doors, which are filled with mirrors, is also good, none of the decoration is borrowed, but is all thoroughly congruous and pleasing. The crest carved on the pediment is that of the original owner. The piece is made in a beautiful soft brown mahogany, with a very rich small feather.
95. A large carving table in dark bronze-coloured mahogany. The legs and frame are both deeply carved in fretted designs, the top being plain, save for a nicely worked edge. These frets were sometimes cut in the solid, sometimes pierced out and applied.



94



95



93

HMS ROCK

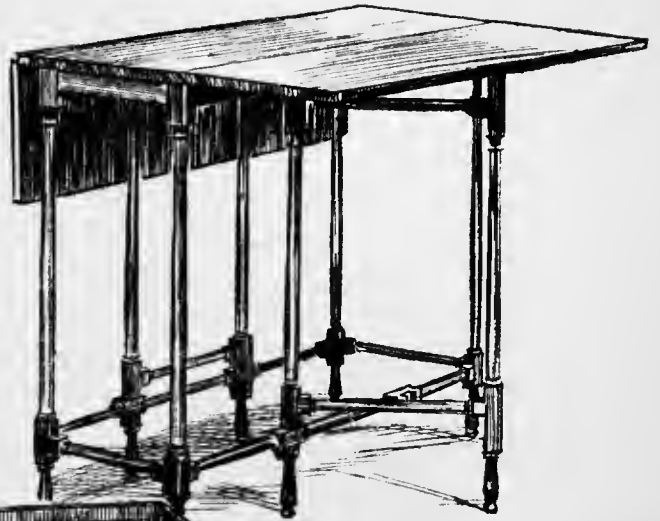
THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

96. A fine arm-chair with a nice pierced and carved back, very typical of its date. The front legs are a little relieved by an oval and bead carving down the front angle.
97. A fire screen of dark mahogany, with the original old Chinese lacquer, and showing the pierced decoration introduced by Chippendale.
98. A special type of small table, made to close up and put aside. These tables were very largely made in dark mahogany and were called butterfly or spider tables.



96



98



97

H. Brock.

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

99. A dumb waiter of a very simple style. These are met with of much finer drawing and proportion.
100. A tall grandfather clock of dark mahogany, without inlay and with a very typical broken arch pediment.
101. A pedestal dressing table. Tables of this form had been introduced in the first instance about 1710, and became increasingly common through the Hanoverian period. The one here shown is a small size with a cupboard at the back for slippers. A slide at the top pulls out to give greater accommodation. The piece is made entirely in plain dark mahogany, with the usual pierced brass handles of the date as its only ornament. The way in which the corner is chamfered off and fluted is very characteristic.
102. A curious little mirror. The frame carved in Chippendale's Chinese manner; the mirror itself is of Chinese work, and is painted behind the glass, with figures and landscapes in colours.



100



102



99



101

H. R. R. R.

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

103. A fine dark mahogany bookcase, with fret cornice and carved pateræ and bands. The diaper doors in this are very beautiful. These large bookcases were some of the grandest pieces made at this time. Whole libraries were fitted in a similar style, and they are not infrequently surmounted by delicately pierced and carved pediments, similar to those in bureau No. 94.
104. A small side table, of characteristic Chippendale drawing.



103



104

AMERICAN
G.

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

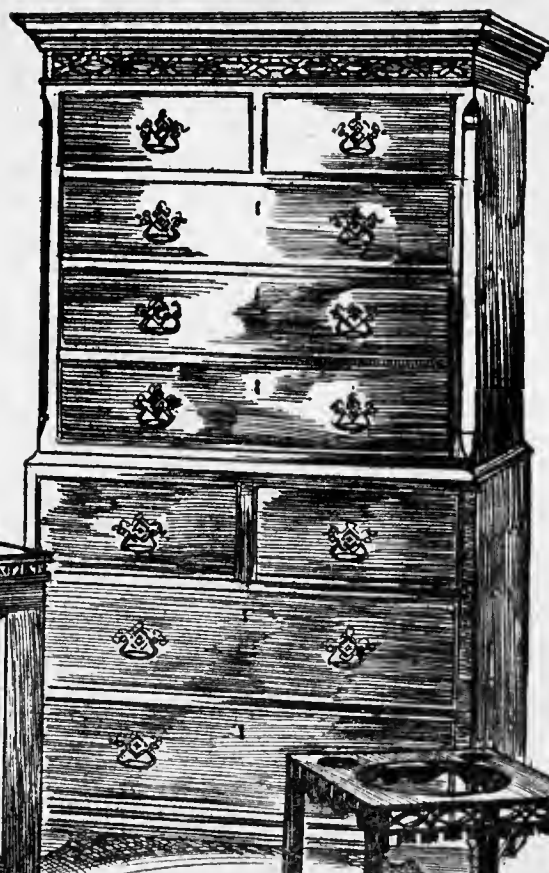
II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

105. A gentleman's low wardrobe or cupboard to hold linen or portfolios.
106. A typical bracket clock of the date, with mahogany case and brass mounts.
107. A tall-boy or double chest of drawers. Earlier forms of these have been already shown. At this date they became very common, and the one drawn is as typical a specimen as could be shown. The frieze is fret-carved, the brass handles are pierced, and the corners chamfered off as in the dressing table of this date shown (No. 101).
108. A small square powdering table or washstand made in dark mahogany. The front frame is prettily pierced both below the basin and the drawer. It is made in the usual dark mahogany of the time.



106

105



107



108

H. B. R. K.

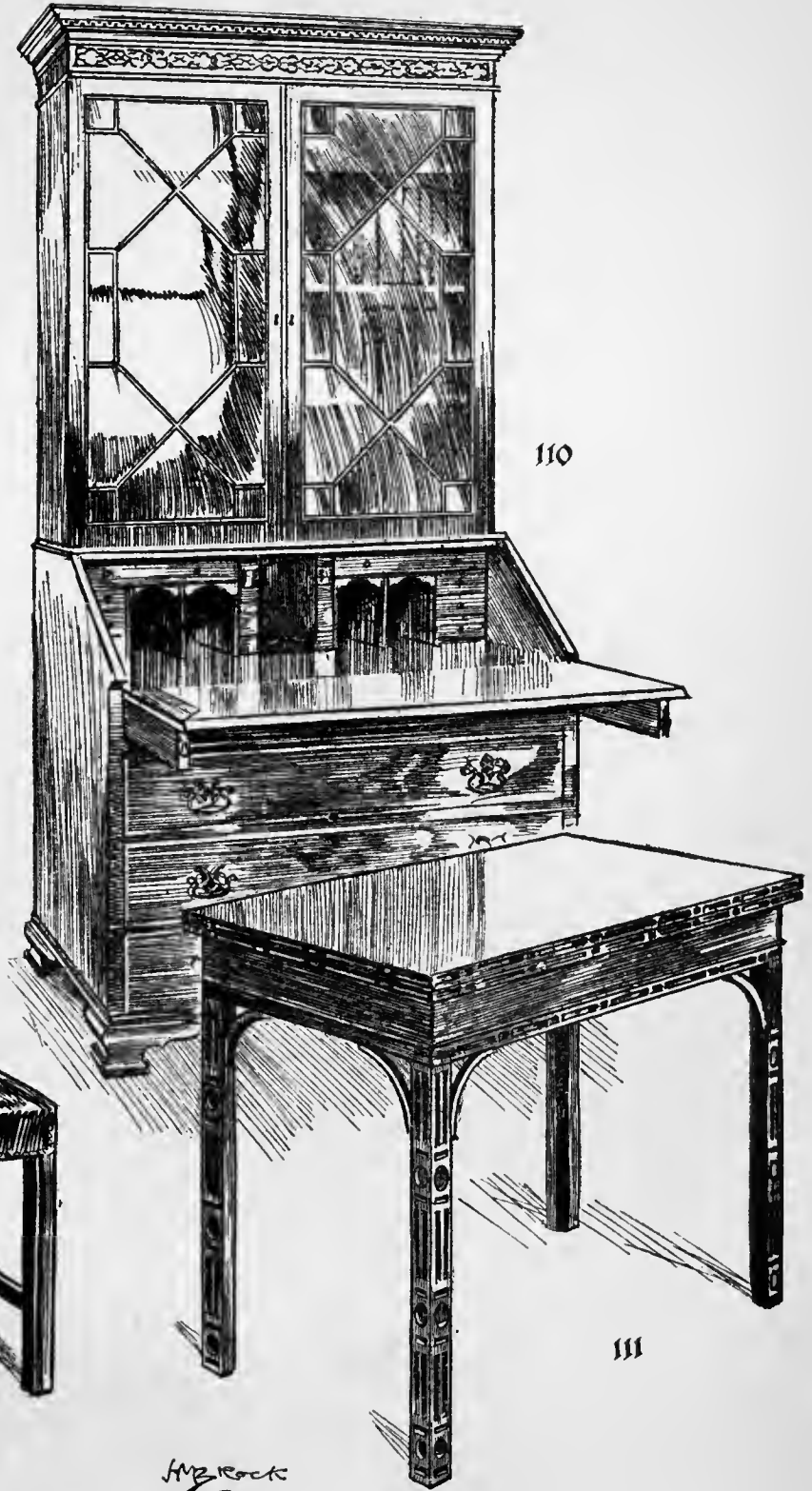
THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

109. Another library or dining room chair.
110. A bookcase bureau which shows how the Queen Anne and Hogarth secretaire became modified. This bureau is in every way a fair sample of its date ; the dog-tooth cornice, fretted frieze, diaper glass doors, and the interior fitted with pigeon holes, etc., and with two sham leather-bound books which pull out as tall narrow drawers, all being features found in scores of such pieces. With a little inlay added inside and out they continued to be made down to 1800.
111. A card table with carved fret legs and borders. The tops when open were at this time cloth-covered, and no longer possessed the little hollowed scoops for counters, or the plain square or round corners for the candlesticks.



109



110

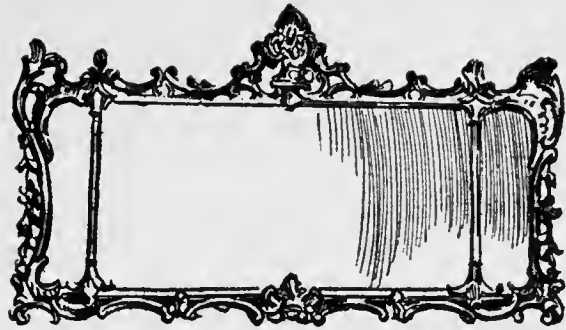
III

JMB. Rock
C.

THE EARLY HANOVERIAN PERIOD

II.—CHIPPENDALE, 1750 TO 1775

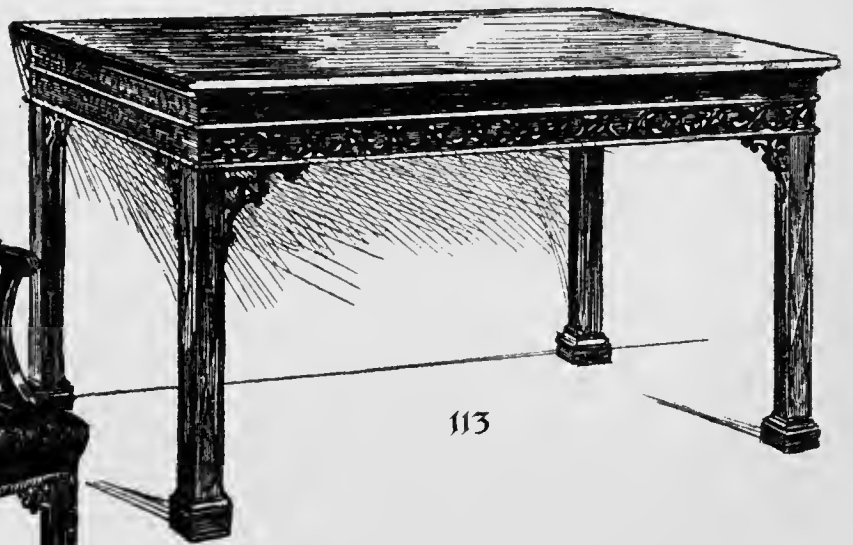
112. A very fine chair of this date, with the so-called ribbon-back decoration. The legs are fluted and beaded, with brackets at the angle of the seat.
113. A side table with fret-carved frame and legs. These tables were the only form of buffet made at this date, and are often pieces of great beauty and elaboration. The one here shown is a good, but not remarkable, specimen.
114. An all-gilt three-piece mirror, now first made long and low to go over the mantelpiece.



114



112



113

Amstrong
6.

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL

THE SECOND PERIOD OF
ENGLISH VENEER,

1770 TO 1820

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL

THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER, 1770 TO 1820

Makers :

ADAM, HEPPELWHITE, SHERATON, ETC.

THE next change which occurred in the fashion of English furniture corresponded very much to the similar development in France from the Louis XV. to Louis XVI. style. The discovery of Pompeii and the researches at Spalatro rendered a careful and true reproduction of Roman classic work popular, and to a certain extent, replaced in both countries the more remotely-derived Classic style evolved from the first Italian renaissance by this later more direct inspiration.

The best designs of this epoch were those of Adam Brothers, the architects, who produced a very fine monograph on the remains of the Palace of Diocletian. Their work was at first architectural, but from designing ceilings, mantelpieces, and other internal details, they were naturally led to supply drawings for the principal pieces of furniture in the rooms they planned. It is probable that in the first instance they intended these designs to be carried out in the solid dark mahogany employed by Chippendale, but soon they and others came into possession of a much greater variety of foreign woods, and gladly availed themselves of the opportunity to carry out their classical detail in so effective a medium.

Throughout this period, beginning about the year in which the Royal Academy held its first exhibition, 1760, it was fully recognised that the designing and making of every adjunct to a fine house was a task worthy of a great artist, and consequently many Royal Academicians, as well as eminent architects, employed themselves in designing or painting the finer pieces made by the cabinet-makers. Amongst these were Angelica Kauffmann, Cipriani, and others. Furniture for the principal reception rooms of the most sumptuous character was the result. Satinwood, harewood (sycamore cut in a special direction of the grain, and stained a silvery grey tone), tulip-wood, olive, and above all, a new light

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL

(THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER, 1770 TO 1820)

tortoiseshell-coloured mahogany with a highly-feathered grain became quickly popular. The fronts and sides of the bureaux, of the cupboards, and other furniture were left with larger surfaces in order that they might be used to display those lovely woods, arranged harmoniously together and spaced out with delicate bandings or inlaid wreaths of variously-tinted woods. This taste for colour increased. Inlay was laid aside for actual painting in oil colours of the greatest freedom and variety. Satinwood was the most usual background, but sometimes the whole surface was painted in monochrome, and medallions in cameo or naturally-coloured pictures were used to decorate the centres or borders of such pieces.

But beside these artists there were other makers working on the same lines but in a more sober manner. One of the best of these was Heppelwhite. His designs are on the whole the most practical of his day. They do not show a great deal of the classic detail which characterizes the finest work of the time, but his furniture is well drawn, simple, and not the least pretentious or vulgar. The book shows in almost every drawing that it was produced when the veneered style had taken full possession of the field. Instead of the slight and fanciful carvings of Chippendale and Ince and Mayhew, the chairs, the tables, and the sideboards are almost without raised or fretted carving. Light and elegant, their principal beauty is their pretty shape and colour, the drawing and the colour both being emphasised by bandings of wood following the outline, and contrasting in colour with the rest of the piece. There is little daring and little exuberance of fancy, but nothing fantastic and nothing objectionable in the perfectly practical and simple furniture shown in Heppelwhite's book.

Towards the end of Heppelwhite's time, Sheraton produced his first and best book. Whilst in many respects greatly resembling his contemporaries, he shows on the whole more originality and fancy. Both they and the other manufacturers of the date introduced a great variety of pieces. Every description of console cupboard, china cabinet, writing table, screen, flower stand, occasional table, and combinations of all these were produced in endless variety, and in all the various woods, painted surfaces and gilding, fashionable.

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL

(THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER, 1770 TO 1820)

Sheraton in the later edition of his book became much more capricious and much less pleasing. The Empire style became an obvious influence, and it is difficult to reconcile oneself to include under one heading the correct and pleasing, almost prudish, designs of Adam and these latest efforts of Sheraton. Turned legs replaced tapered square ones, and gradually the style died away in work, clumsy without being practical, of little artistic or even antique interest.

Pretty and interesting, however, as this style at first was, it always lacked the strong drawing of the early Hanoverian period. At its best it is furniture designed in a style borrowed from another age, and is an example of the real end for which a thing is made, being sacrificed to the exigency of a design never intended to be applied to the purpose. Thus in the writing tables the convenience is spoiled by making the legs so spindley as to be unsteady, and the writing space so small as to be cramped; whereas in the earlier time every article was made in the most appropriate possible manner, and its requirements themselves made use of for a sound, structural, decorative form.

In order to show the furniture in use in each period the examples selected, as already intimated, have been purposely chosen of average excellence, such as can be met with in considerable abundance. It would have been easy by selecting only the very remarkable bits to have shown far finer and more extraordinary specimens of artistic work, but it would not have answered the end in view, namely, to enable the amateur easily to date and discriminate any furniture he may come across. It adds very much to the pleasure of going through fine old houses or the collections of friends to be able to correctly allocate the furniture to its time. Some periods, of course, suffer more than others by having only their more ordinary work illustrated. Thus, the earlier periods generally are fairly represented by their good average furniture, whilst that under consideration is rather unfairly dealt with by this process. Many of Adam's and Sheraton's fine things were extraordinarily fine, whilst the average furniture of the day was by no means excellent.

In conclusion, I would specially warn the reader that many puzzling pieces will be met with which appear to belong in some

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL

(THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER, 1770 TO 1820)

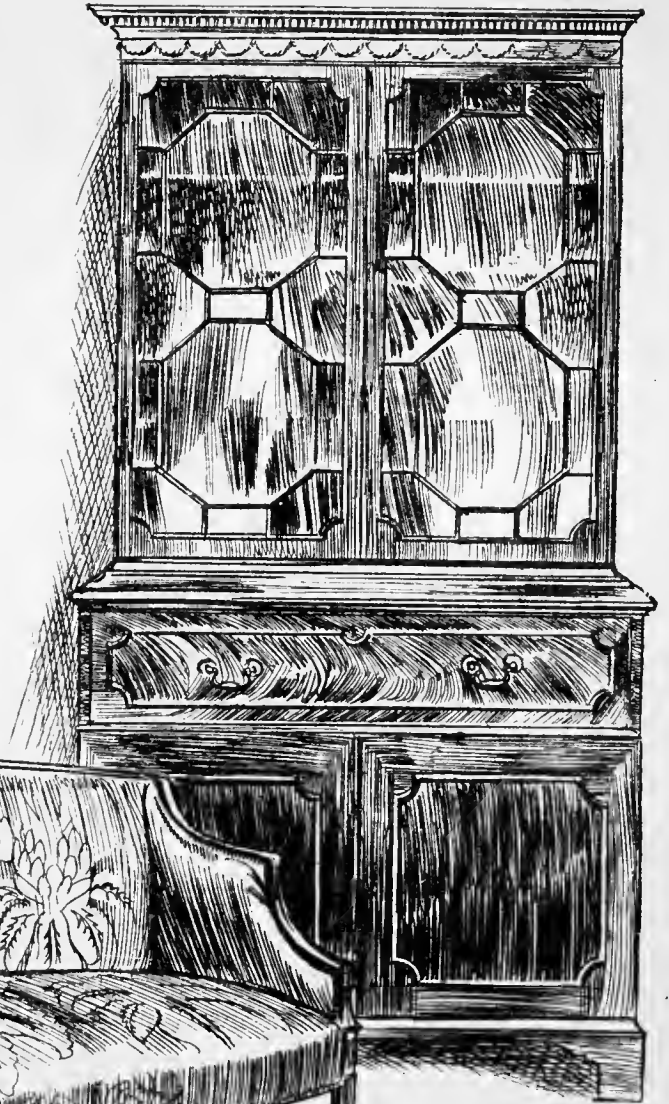
respects to one and in others to another date. Many of them will, of course, be genuine transition pieces in which the artist was feeling his way, and in that case they will be of equally good work with either of the styles between which they come; but a great many were simply country-made things in which a country cabinet-maker ignorantly used a new decoration, designed for a differently made piece, on furniture made in the old way. A similar and worse botch is often caused by a modern and ignorant curiosity dealer putting an ornament characteristic of a type of furniture, for which there may be a temporary craze, into old pieces of another date, in which it is incongruous and out of place. Thus, a few years ago quantities of fine plain Chippendale furniture was spoiled by the introduction of inlaid shells and fans, which literally ruined it.

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

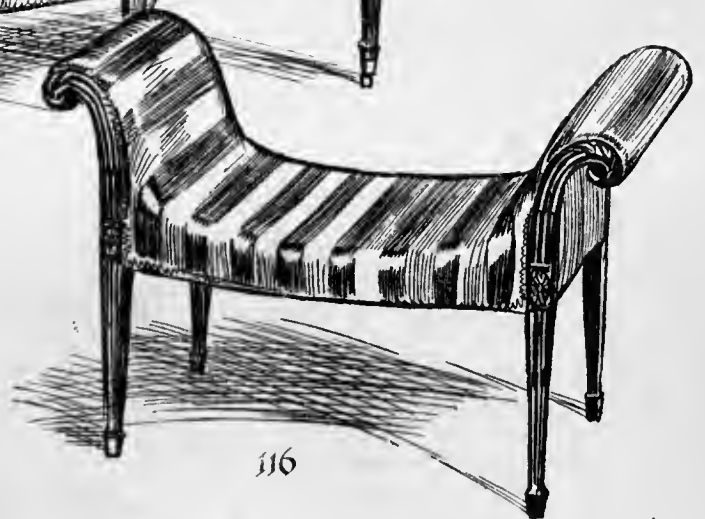
115. A settee of Adam design, made in dark mahogany and of the earlier part of the classic period. The fluted leg and pateræ are characteristic.
116. A window seat of the same style and date. These little seats were made to go into the recesses in front of the high, narrow windows of the period. They are interesting and elegant bits, and have a great variety of form.
117. A very beautiful Adam secretaire. The writing portion pulls out like a drawer and lets down, a variation from the sloped front which first appears about this date. The frieze is carved in relief with festoons, and the diaper glazing of the doors is specially light and elegant. The doors below and the front of the desk have panels formed by a raised beading. The wood is dark mahogany, without any inlay.



115



117



116

JMB ROOK

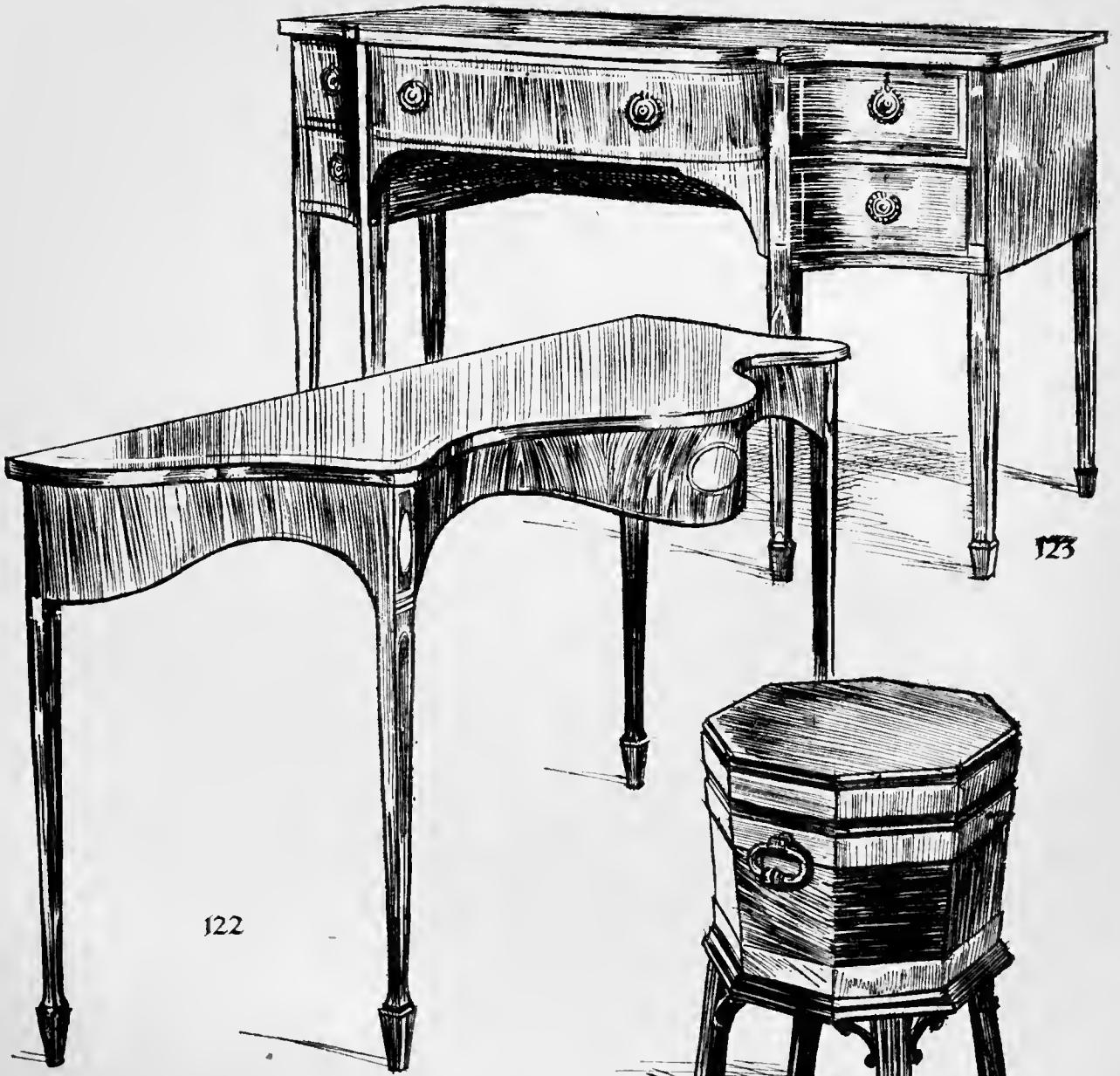
THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

118. A small Pembroke table with leaves folding down. These are shaped and carved with a rich delicate design on the edge. This is an early specimen of a table which speedily became very fashionable, and was made in an immense variety of woods, and was inlaid and painted to make it a conspicuous drawing room piece.
119. The small shield-shaped toilet mirror standing on this table is a Heppelwhite design. The drawing in many of these small mirrors is extraordinarily varied and hardly ever at fault, in this respect being in striking contrast to the modern copies made from them.
120. A wardrobe belonging in style equally to the Chippendale or Classic period. It is made of dark mahogany with a fretted frieze, panelled doors, and with pateræ at the corners. These doors open, and inside are oak sliding shelves to take clothes; below are three drawers. This was the usual type of wardrobe during the eighteenth century, very few hanging cupboards being met with, probably owing to the fact that at that time nearly all the rooms were provided with recessed cupboards.
121. A chair of Heppelwhite design. These shield-back were the immediate successors of the latest and lightest Chippendale chairs. The backs are less flamboyant, are generally very well drawn but a little tame, and the legs are made without struts and much lighter, being slightly tapered, and ending in the form of toe shown in this sketch. An enormous variety of such chairs were produced, and a great many are still in existence.



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122. A serpentine carving table made in light tortoiseshell mahogany, inlaid with satinwood. These took the place of the solid fret tables shown (No. 95), and with their accompanying sideboards were one of the most striking innovations of the new style.
123. A simple sideboard of the same type, with only lines of inlay. All the furniture of this period has been greatly spoiled by ignorant dealers inserting a great deal of meretricious ornament in the way of shell and fan inlay ; all pieces so inlaid should be examined with great care, and avoided if the inlay does not appear to form an integral part of the original design.
124. A wine bin made of mahogany, with brass bands and handles. The cover lifts, and the interior is lined with lead. These were first made to complete the sideboards, and are often beautifully finished.



122

123

124

AMZ ROCK

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

125. A large library bookcase with a secretaire pulling out as a drawer in the centre. This is in tortoiseshell mahogany with a very rich grain. The straight fluted frieze is a type much used at this date.
126. A writing table with a round revolving top, covered with leather, and with drawers in the frame. The one shown is a very plain example, but is such as will be found in almost every old country house in England.
127. A late Chippendale or early Heppelwhite dining room chair, with round back rail; a pattern made between 1760 and 1775.



125

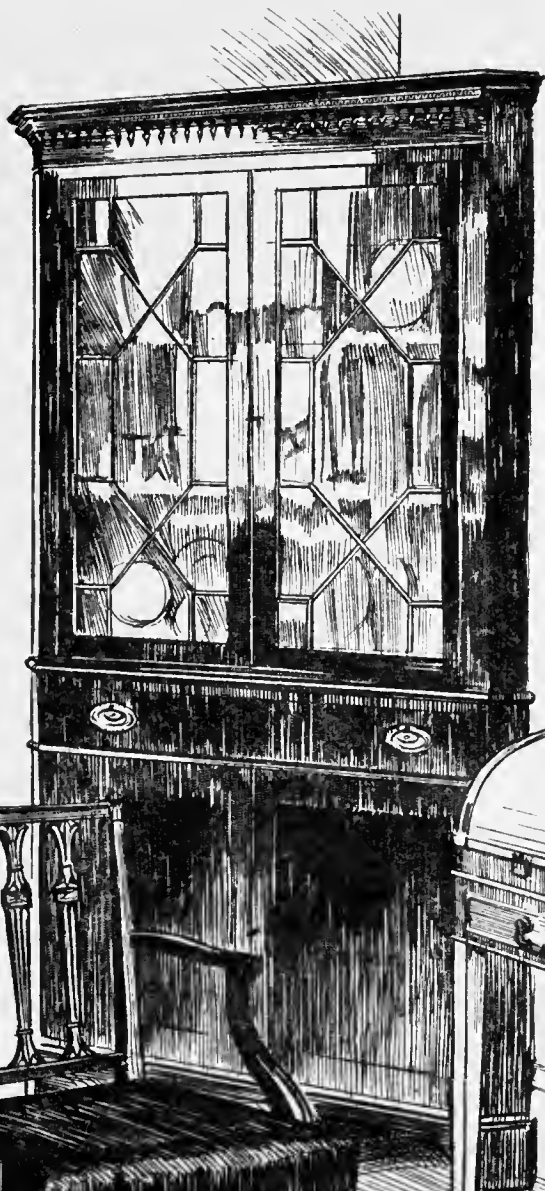
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126

H. G. G. G.

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

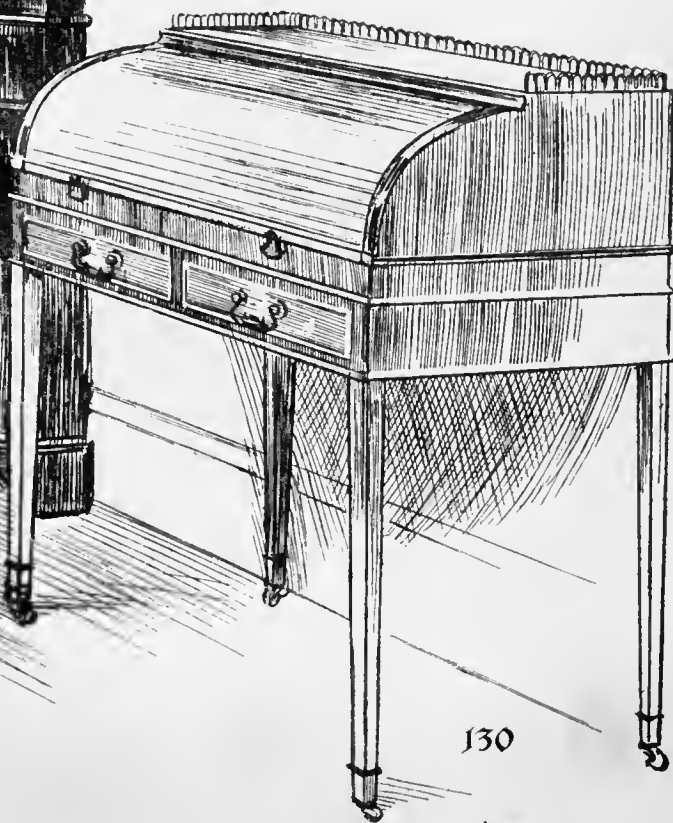
128. An arm-chair made of dark mahogany, carved with pateræ, and with straight fluted bars. These chairs were made at the same time and a little later than the shield back patterns.
129. A Heppelwhite corner cupboard, with glazed diaper doors, made in the light feathered mahogany. The pretty drop cornice is a favourite of this date. The interiors of these cupboards were generally painted, and were fitted with scalloped shelves.
130. A tambour writing desk. This is yet another form of secretaire made for the first time about this date. The rounded top is made to slide back. In the specimen shown this tambour is made with thin slats of mahogany glued on canvas, and is flexible, but a similar desk was made with a solid rounded cover, and was often inlaid. The slide in the one shown pulls out to give extra writing space, and at the back the inside is fitted with small drawers with satinwood fronts. The outside is entirely plain, with the exception of the brass handles and gallery.



129



128



130

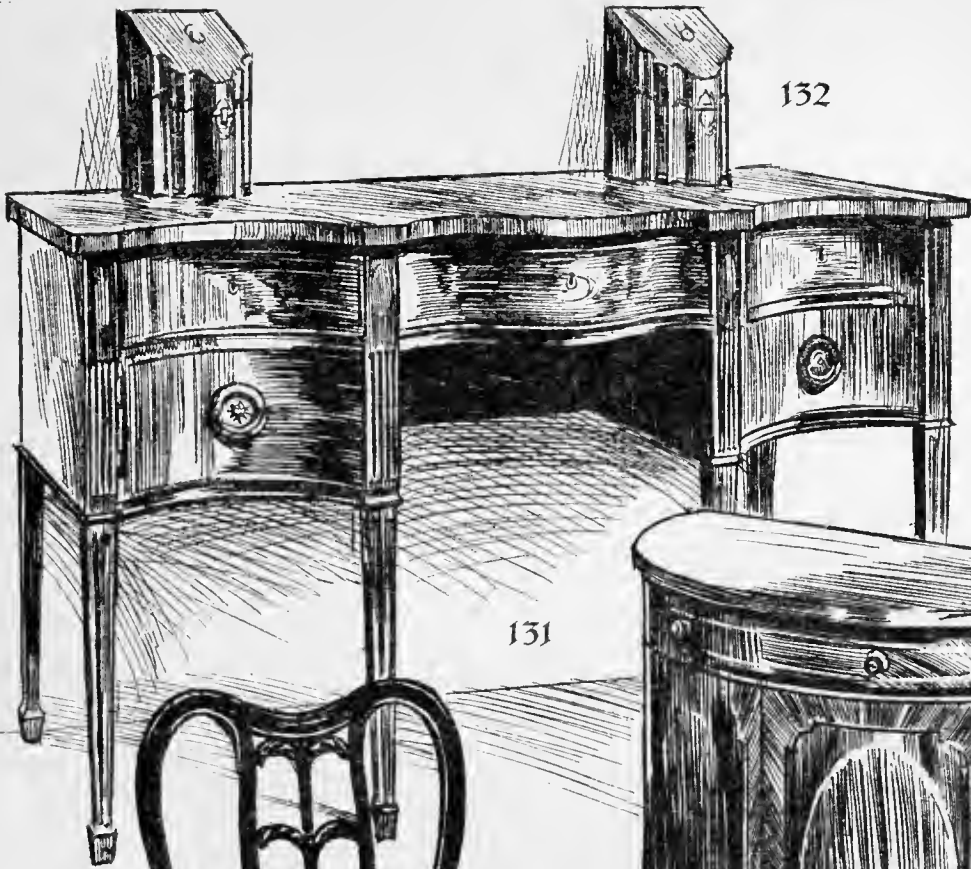
J. M. ROE

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL

THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER

1770 TO 1820

131. A small serpentine sideboard or side table. This is a very characteristic piece of eighteenth century furniture. They are sometimes fitted with drawers only, but as often with cellarettes for wine, or to open as cupboards at the side. They are generally made in a very nicely figured brown mahogany, with simple lines of satin or boxwood inlay just sufficient to draw attention to the pretty curves of the drawing. Many of them were probably used as dressing tables at the time, and to this purpose they have been largely applied.
132. A pair of knife boxes fitted to hold spoons and forks, etc. These were dropped down holes into the blocks inside. They are pieces on which a great deal of charming work was often employed, and are found in mahogany, satinwood, and shagreen. The mounts are generally brass, but in the finer ones are beautifully made in silver. The knife handles were of white or green ivory, of silver, and occasionally of blue and white china.
133. An interesting chair, dating about 1770. The back is a heart-shaped variety of the shield. The legs are round and fluted of a type which later became almost universal, replacing the square taper leg with the toe, which itself had just succeeded the heavier Chippendale.
134. A console cupboard. This article was first made in the Chippendale period; they are rare until about 1775, but became more common towards the Sheraton period. The one shown is a very characteristic Heppelwhite piece made of light mahogany, with satin lines and with brass knobs. The square, tapered foot shows it to be early.

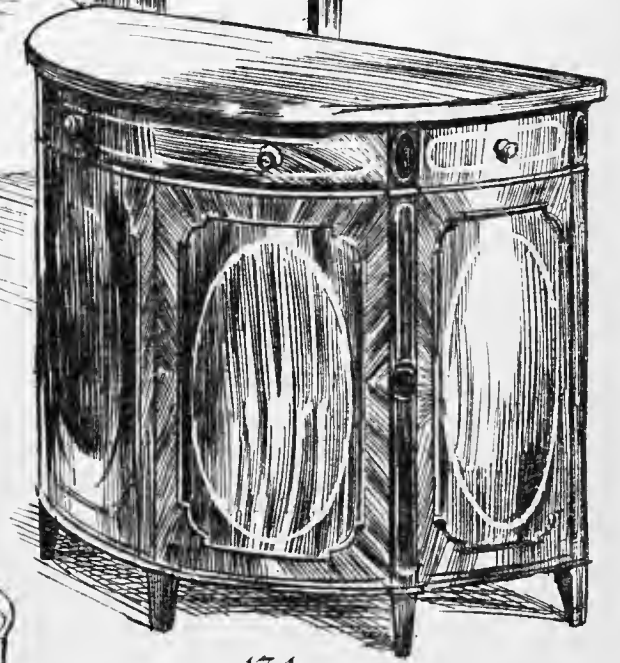


132



131

133



134

AMBROSE
G.

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

135. A Heppelwhite bedside table of light mahogany, with satinwood lines.
136. A beautiful specimen of a Heppelwhite four-post bed. The pillars are solid mahogany, gracefully carved, with wheat-ears and festoons. These four-post beds were very important articles of furniture both in this and the preceding periods, and much beautiful work was lavished on them. The drapery shown on this bedstead is, of course, not the original, which was probably much heavier and more ornate.
137. A toilet glass and small toilet table of the same date. These small toilet glasses, with fitted drawers, are particularly well-finished pieces.



135

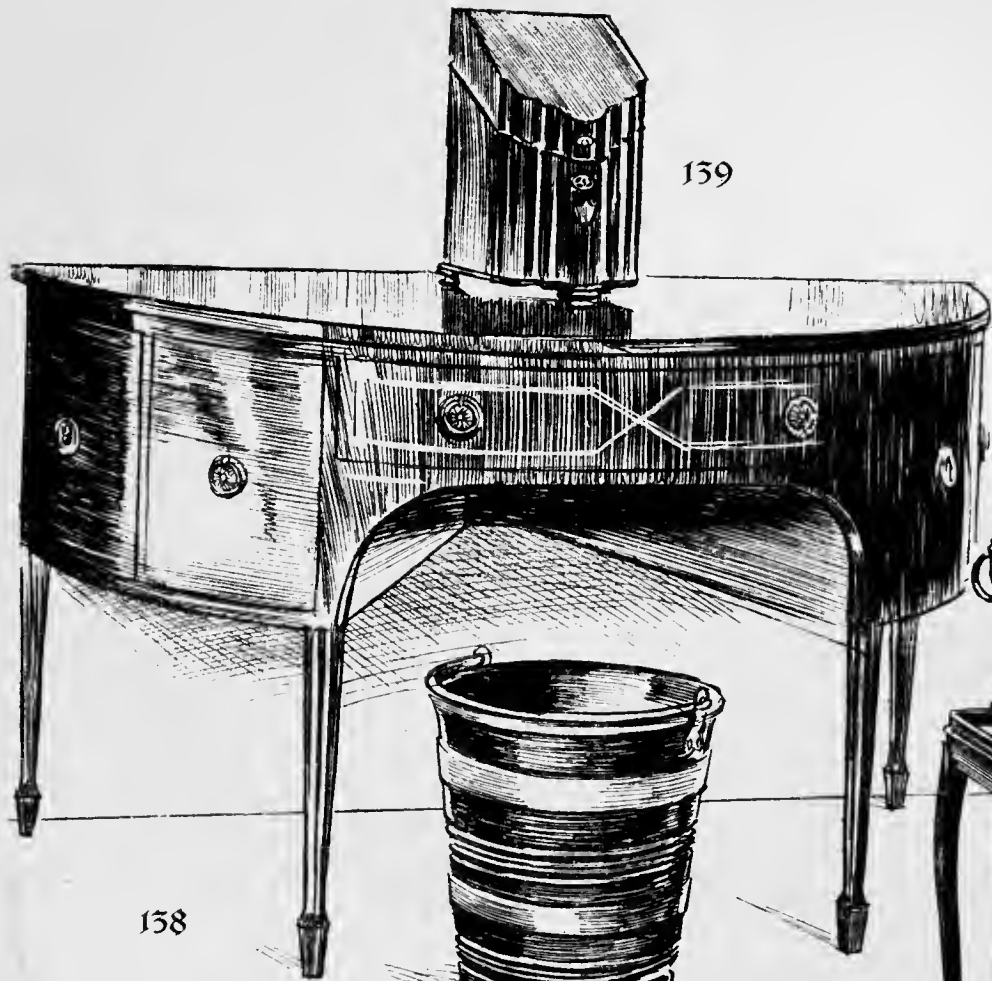
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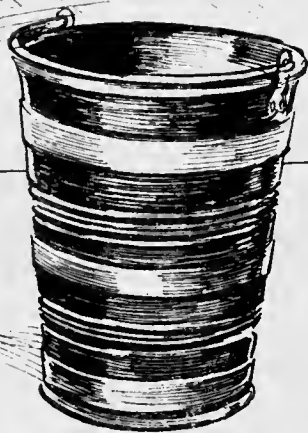
H. B. ...

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

138. A semi-circular Sheraton sideboard made of tortoiseshell mahogany of the finest grain, inlaid with satinwood lines, and with round brass ring handles.
139. Another knife and spoon case, with silver key escutcheon and shield.
140. A large ice pail for wine, of dark mahogany, with brass handle and bands.
141. An urn stand ; the slide pulls out to place the tea cup on.



159



140



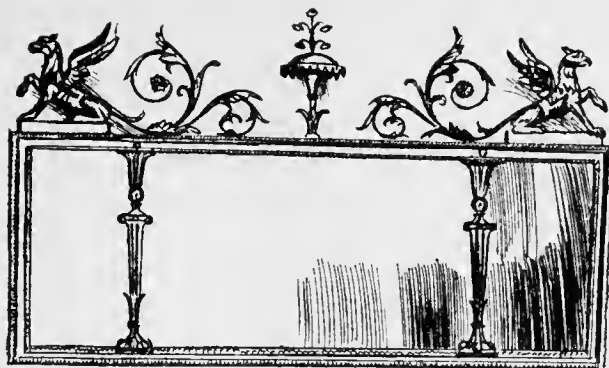
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AMZROCK
6

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

142. A complete sideboard of the finest type produced at this date. The urns and pedestals at the side form a part, though an independent part, of the whole. The urns are fitted to hold spoons and forks, the pedestals open with doors, and are lined with metal, and there is also a heating apparatus in which the plates were kept warm. The centre-board has a brass rail for a curtain, and a step at the back for the better display of silver. The urns have silver mounts, hall marked 1790. Such urns were frequently lined with lead for use as wine-coolers. Sideboards of this kind were made by Heppelwhite, Sheraton, and the other manufacturers of this day.
143. A gilt Adam overmantel mirror.‡
144. A card table made of dark mahogany, with the favourite fluted frame, of the early Heppelwhite style.

143



142



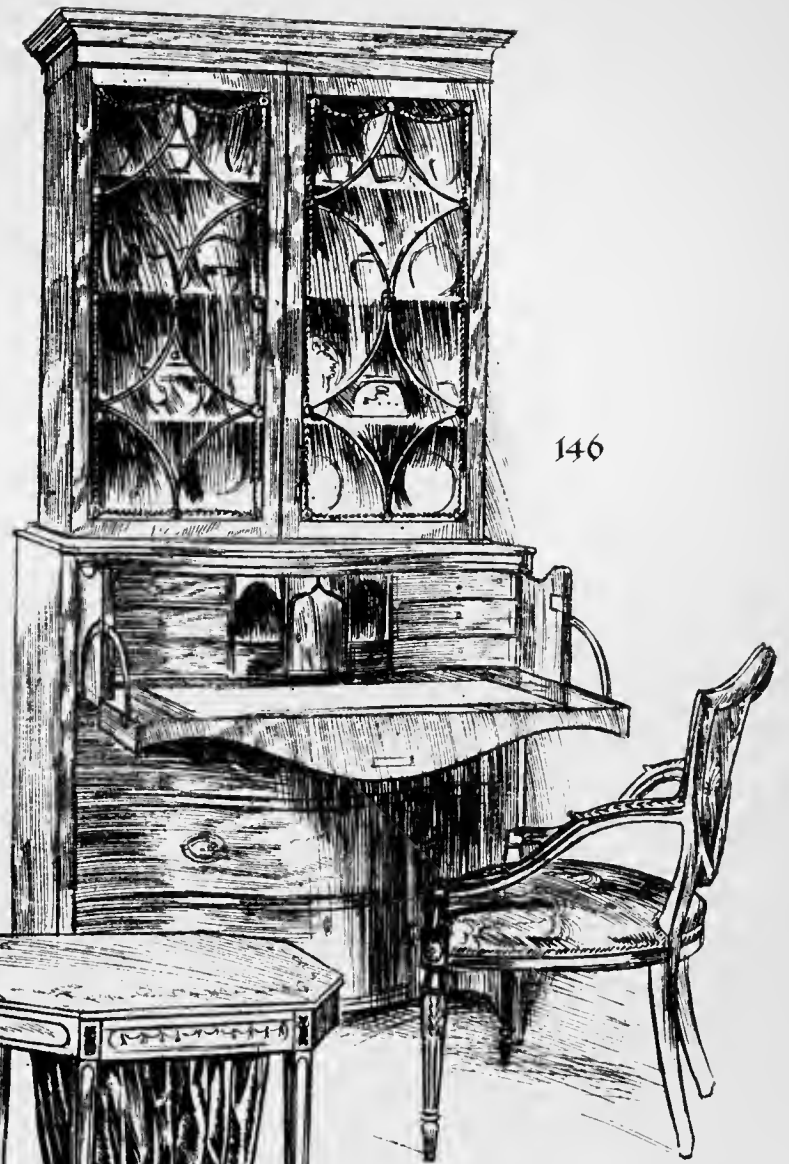
144

H. G. ROCK

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

145. A gilt shield back arm-chair of the early Sheraton type. The legs are slight and round, carved and fluted. Many of these comfortable drawing room chairs, rather Louis XVI. in style, were made from 1770 onwards, and were generally covered with fine silk damask.
146. This bookcase bureau is made of the finest satinwood of a soft rich yellow tone and with clouded feather. The diapers in the doors are of wood, whilst the wreaths have the unusual feature of being in applied lead. During the end of the eighteenth century many most beautiful specimens of such pieces were made often painted and inlaid with great delicacy.
147. A small painted satinwood work table with silk bag. These little tables were made in endless variety, small and light, so that they could be easily shifted to the side of a chair, and were also fitted with screens and with writing accommodation, or with chess boards.

146



145

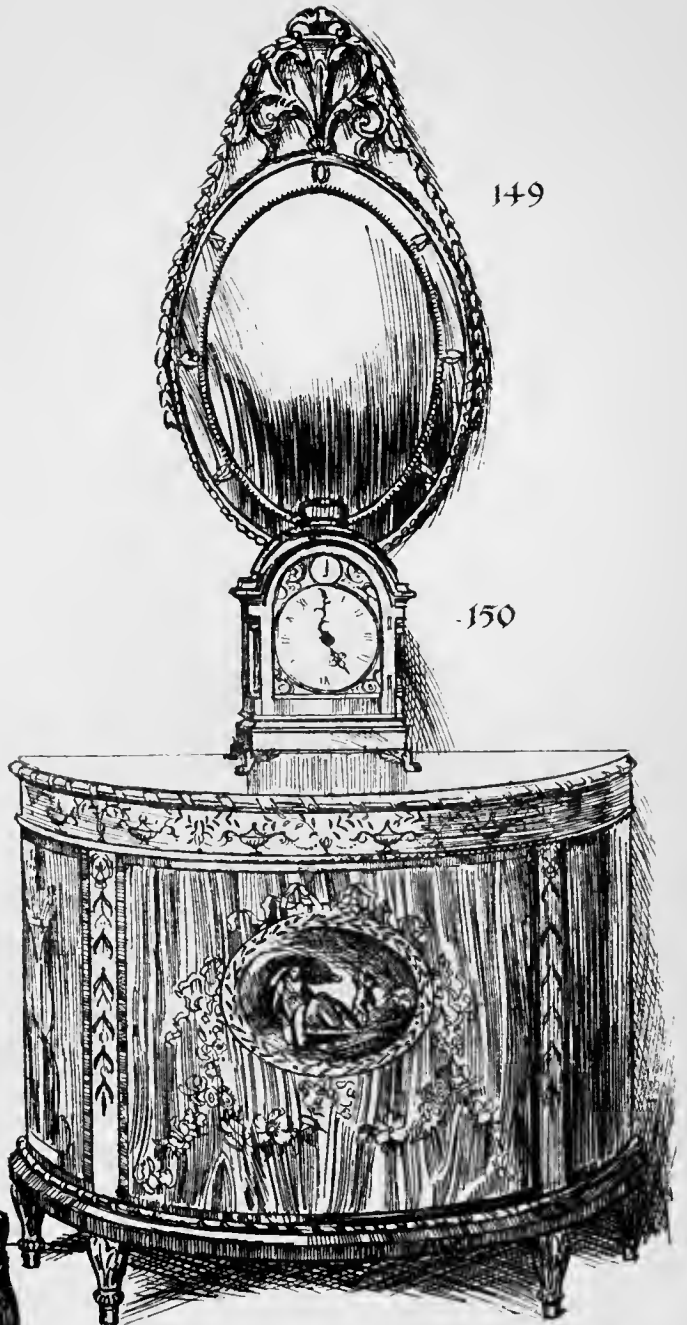
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147

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

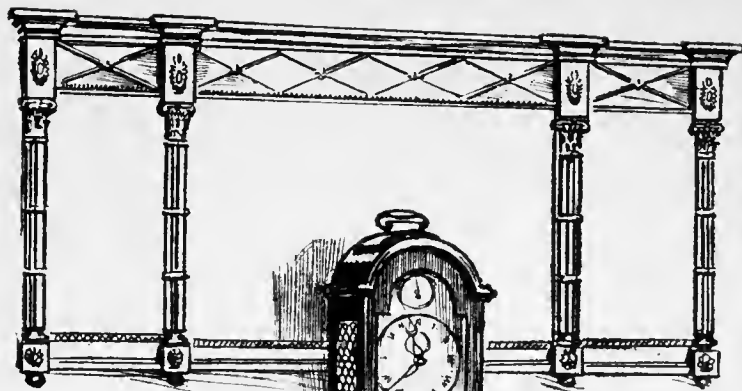
148. An arm-chair with stuffed back and mahogany scroll legs and arms.
149. A small upright oval gilt mirror. The husk and Greek honeysuckle decoration in this is exceedingly Adam in character. The circle of gilt beading, with the pateræ dividing the outer and inner sections, is a feature of the mirrors about 1770. It is worth noting how widely such glasses differ from those of the preceding styles.
150. A satin-wood bracket clock with brass mounts.
151. A console cupboard of the highest quality. The entire surface is veneered satin-wood, with inlays of coloured woods forming a design, the centre of which is painted in the manner of Angelica Kauffman. The beading at the top and bottom and the feet are of ormolu. Such pieces as this and the satin-wood secretaires, already described, gave immense richness to the Sheraton drawing room.



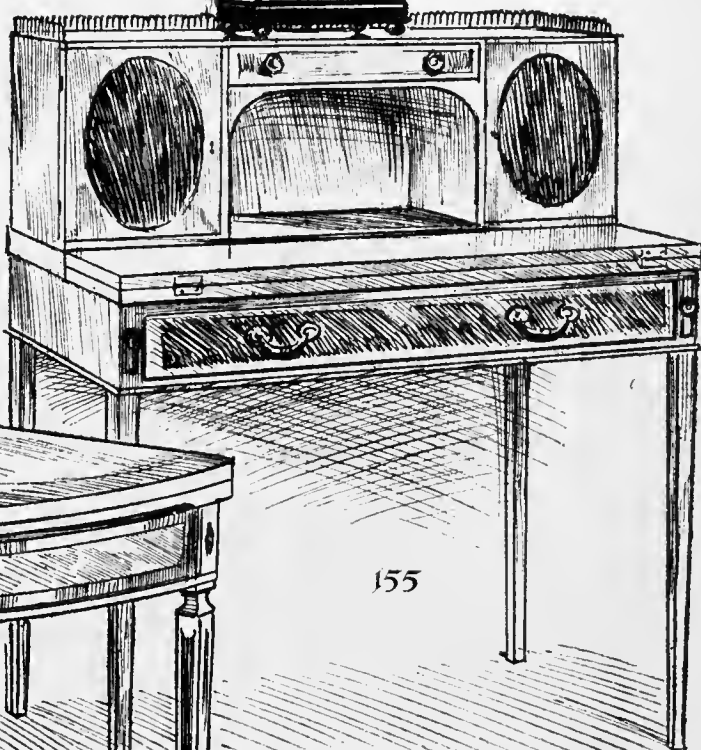
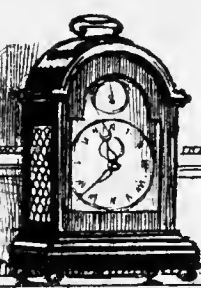
THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

152. A Sheraton card table, banded with tulip and harewood. This kind of table was made from 1780 onwards in great variety. The later ones, instead of being half-circles, were flattened in the front, with rounded corners.
153. A Sheraton overmantel, about 1790. These mirrors were made in astonishing numbers, and the better ones are pleasing, though they finally became coarse and clumsy in the extreme.
154. A plain ebonized bracket clock, with brass ball feet and pierced brass work at the sides.
155. A writing table of yet another type. This is made of satin-wood, inlaid with panels of amboyna. The flap above the drawers folds back on to slides which draw out. These pieces are very pretty for showing the contemporary Chelsea or Worcester china, but give rather unsatisfactory accommodation for serious writing.

153



154



155



152

AMZROCK
6

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

156. A Pembroke table, made of harewood, with an oval satinwood centre.
157. A library bookcase of late Sheraton design. The wood in this is a highly-figured fiddle-back mahogany, with a redder shade than the older Sheraton wood showed. The straight panes, with the Greek honeysuckle at the corners in the glazed doors, point to the piece being as late as 1810.
158. A sofa table; a very familiar Sheraton design. The one shown is of mahogany, with a band of rosewood on the top. They are often met with in satinwood, both inlaid and painted, and were favourite drawing room tables.



156.

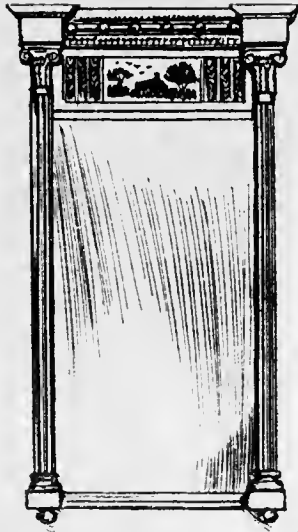
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H. B. ROOPE
6

THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

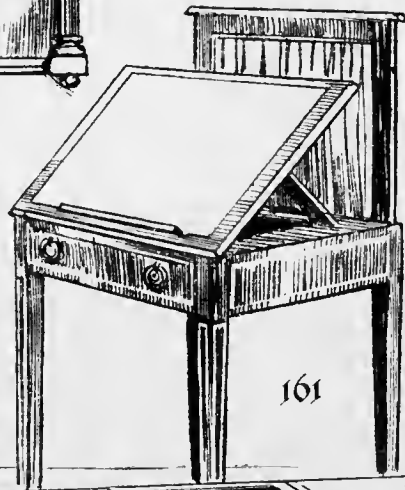
159. A late Sheraton chair, made in great variety, sometimes painted and gilded, sometimes in rosewood or mahogany. The front legs, different in shape from any made in the whole course of English furniture, are evidently borrowed from the Empire style.
160. An upright gilt mirror, with reeded columns at the side. The cornice is fluted with large beads, the frieze a landscape, painted in sepia under the glass. These were made about 1810 in great variety.
161. A small satinwood desk, made with a screen to pull up at the back.
162. An interesting and characteristic piece of Sheraton furniture, made for a lady's boudoir. The whole is of satinwood, inlaid with panels of amboyna. The centre slab is covered with leather, the two side covers lift back and display beautifully-made little boxes for dressing table and writing purposes, the doors of the side pedestals open with drawers and slides inside.



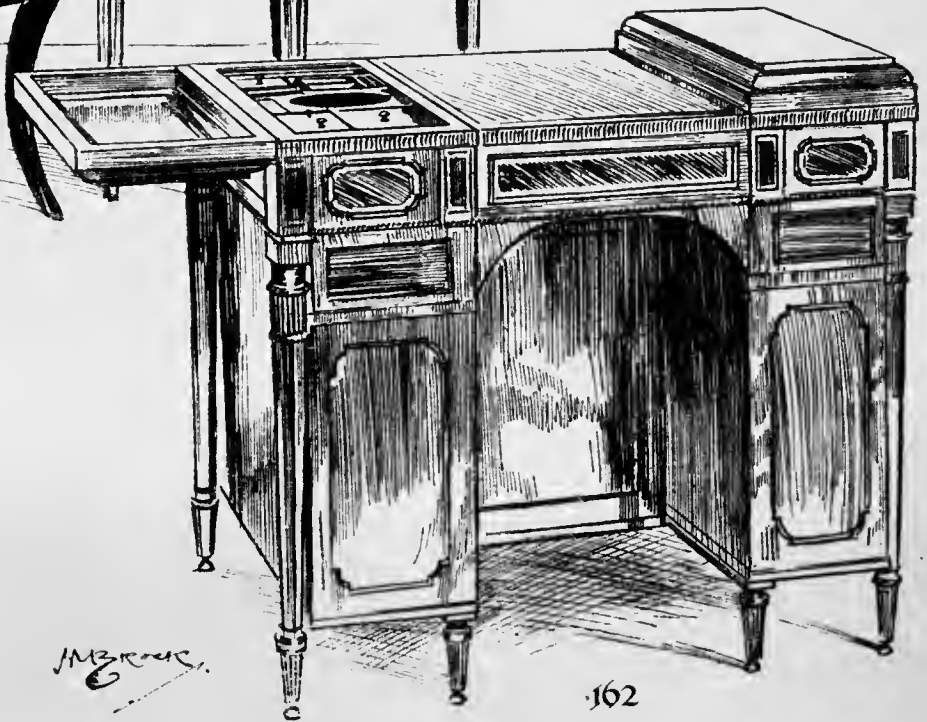
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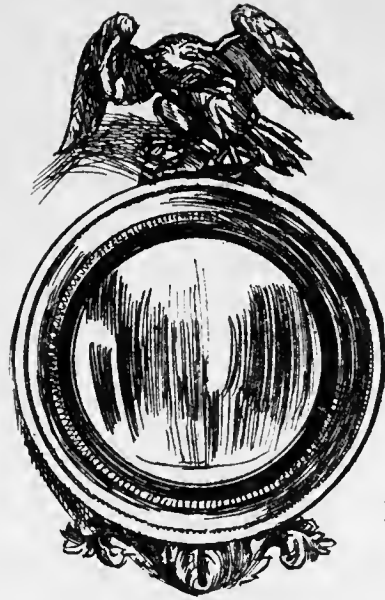


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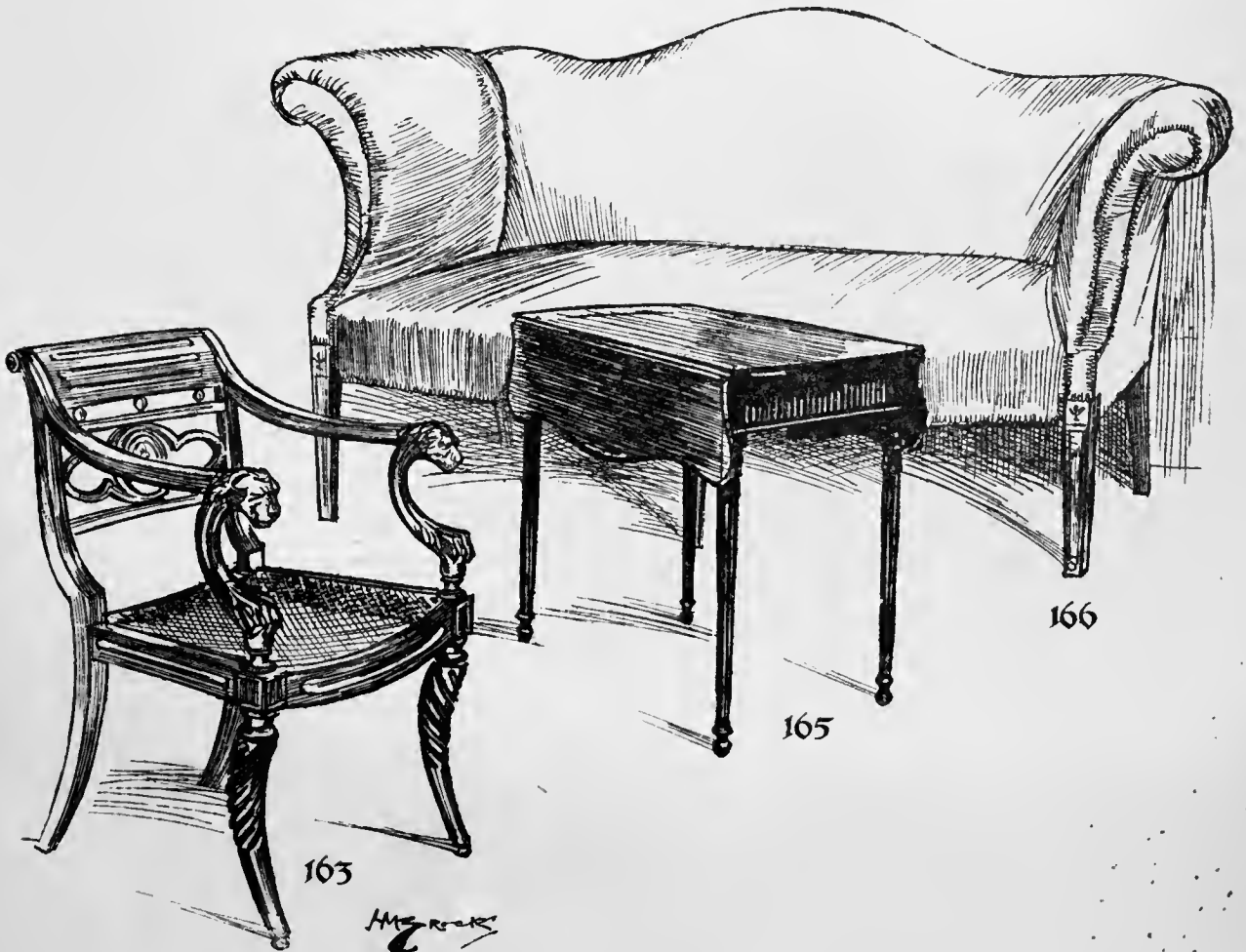
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THE CLASSIC REVIVAL
THE SECOND PERIOD OF ENGLISH VENEER
1770 TO 1820

163. A typical late Sheraton chair, about 1810, gilded with cane seat for loose silk cushion.
164. A circular gilt mirror of a design first introduced at this period. The convex glass makes a complete picture of the room. They have usually a black reeded mount round the glass, and are often surmounted, like the specimen shown, with an eagle.
165. A plain light mahogany Pembroke table, with scalloped edge to the top and rounded reeded legs.
166. A stuffed-back settee, with plain mahogany legs of rather earlier date than the other pieces grouped on this plate.



164



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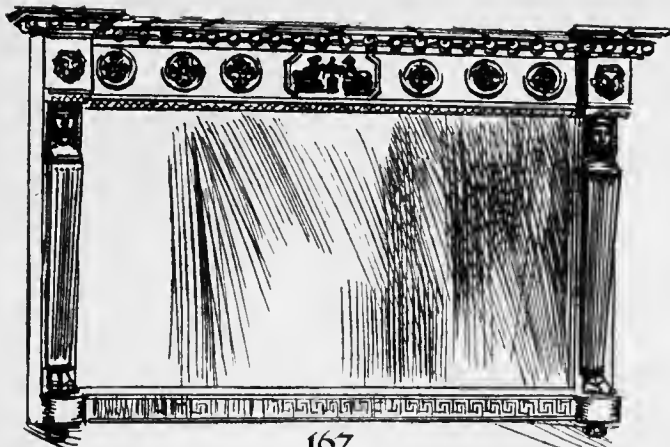
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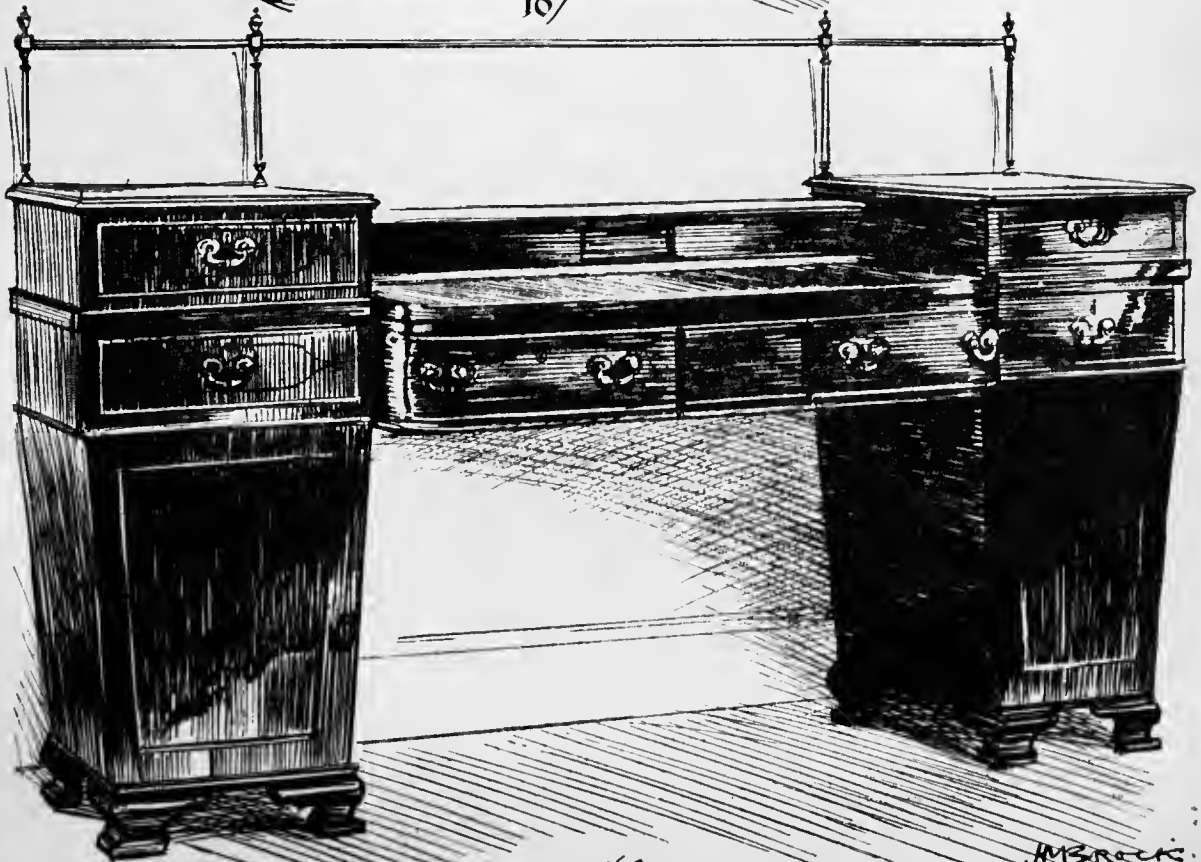
1770 TO 1820

167. A gilt overmantel of Sheraton design, about 1805. The raised decoration in dull Wedgwood black shows an Egyptian figure at each end. The ornament owes its origin to Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, and is, of course, still commoner on French Empire furniture.
168. The latest type of Sheraton sideboard, and the precursor of early Victorian. In this the originally separated pedestals have been attached and made one with the central board of the Heppelwhite period, and it only remained to enclose the space here left open for the wine bin to change the piece finally into the old-fashioned sideboard of 1837.

Like silver, this sort of furniture deteriorated first in design, and then in workmanship. Some of the things up to the reign of George IV. are very well made, but are no longer beautiful, just as Rundell and Bridge made excellently-finished, elaborate, but very ugly, plate. Afterwards the same ornate effect was aimed at, but the good execution which redeemed, to a certain extent, the silver and the furniture up to 1830, was replaced by coarse, showy work.



167



168

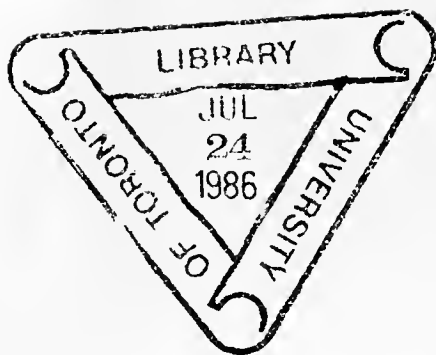
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