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ENGLISH FURNITURE AND FURNITURE MAKERS.
I have always considered that a preface and an apology are, more or less, synonymous terms, and what I now indite is no exception. In this publication I aspire to the dignity of a hand-book, though I know that by so doing I lay myself open to criticism. Where I am wrong in dates of facts I ask for no mercy. It is the unpardonable sin, arising from sheer carelessness and an insufficient sense of the responsibility a man imposes on himself when taking pen in hand. Errors there must be, for I am human and claim my right to err; but any corrections in matters of fact will, however stated, be received most thankfully.

Yet I would point out to my critics—I trust I may use in advance the time-honoured adjective "kindly"—that, among other things, I have treated of two subjects—one comparatively new, the other absolutely so. I refer to the study of the minor men (scarcely more than mentioned elsewhere), and the attempt to give a reasonable working system for the assignation of dates to early eighteenth-century furniture. In those two things I hold different views from every previous writer, though not, I am pleased to say, from the best of
those who have done me the honour to read what I have written on the subject. Both these things are matters either of probability or of personal opinion, but I trust that the facts I adduce are sufficient to warrant the deductions drawn.

There are certain disadvantages in publishing articles on any subject and afterwards issuing them in book form. One is, that some writers have very little idea of *meum* and *tuum*, and many of my facts, dates, and even phrases, have already been made use of by others. It is impossible to write on such a wide subject as the present without being indebted to, or influenced by, previous work; but I would ask for care before I am accused of plagiarism. I cannot, to take a very small instance, patent the idea of the resemblance between the top rail of a Chippendale chair and a Cupid’s bow.

A considerable part of this book has already appeared, but I have given great care to correction, cutting out, and re-writing—I trust with advantage.

I am indebted to the courtesy of the Editors of *The Connoisseur* and *The Burlington* for the use of much of the letterpress, and most of the illustrations.
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Early English Furniture.

CHAPTER I.

PRE-DIRECTOR FURNITURE.

The change in English design which came about on the accession of William and Mary is unparalleled in the history of our furniture, both for suddenness and entirety. We have always stolen freely, whether in galleons or design, but English Tudor is not quite Renaissance and what we took of Empire, or, to a less extent, of L'Art Nouveau, was by no means so wholesale. In every other case the first desideratum was an English translation; but here there was no translation—only a slavish copy of the original.

The history of a country and its furniture are very closely associated, but never, perhaps, has there been quite such a striking instance as this. For a time everything, including gardens, was Dutch; and it seems to have been a point of honour and loyalty to discard the Jacobean style and adopt the Dutch, just as it came over with the new king. The revolution, in fact, was as complete in furniture as in anything else.

After this comes a long time of incessant but
very gradual change, in which the continuity was only broken by experiments, such as Chippendale’s flamboyance, or Adam’s more purely French work. Never, through the eighteenth century, is there anything but a slow evolution in our furniture, and throughout the general tendency of the lines on which it progressed remained the same. New influences—new blood, so to speak—came in time after time from foreign countries, and chiefly from France; old styles were resuscitated and adapted to modern requirements, but never again did home politics affect general structure. The reverse is, curiously enough, the case. No new foreign influence can be traced in the time of George I., but rather an abandonment of extraneous design, and a marked attempt on the part of our cabinet-makers to work on lines of their own.

The exact extent of the period which lay between “Queen Anne” and “Chippendale” can merely be guessed. Only two dates are given, and one of these I take leave to doubt—in fact, more than doubt.

If we knew the exact year in which mahogany came into general use in England the difficulty would be at an end, though it must always be remembered that there were pieces—even chairs—of pure Queen Anne patterns, made in the new wood. The candle-box date seems to have been generally accepted as true, and statements have been made again and again that Dr. Gibbons, who insisted on the use of some planks he imported (for medical purposes) in the construction of this box, “revolutionised furniture.”
Queen Anne Settee
(Victoria and Albert Museum.)
The first mention of this supposed occurrence I have been able to find is in an encyclopædia in 1797, where it is given on the authority of "Henry Mill, Esq., a gentleman of undoubted veracity." In any case this was not the first time the wood had been used. Dr. Lyons has found a mahogany article mentioned in an American auctioneer's catalogue of 1708. In this country a chair was made of it for William III., and it is at least possible that the wood was brought home and used by Sir Walter Raleigh.

The internal evidence of the story itself does not render it more believable. The wood, we are told, came to England as planks, which proves it to have been in actual use at that time in the West Indies. In a comparatively recent settlement, therefore, there were tools capable of dealing with it, while in England, where oak, ebony, boxwood, etc., had been in use for ages, specially tempered tools had to be made for it. The story is so evidently inaccurate that I think the date assigned (1720) need not be regarded as historical. It is more easy to understand how the immense amount of early mahogany furniture came into existence if we suppose the wood to have been used simultaneously in England and America.

Though we cannot fix an early date for the introduction of mahogany, we can take the publication of the "Director," in 1754, and, by working backwards, arrive at an approximation. When first, in the pages of The Connoisseur, I suggested a broad system for dating early eighteenth-century furniture, I did so in a more or less tentative
manner, the only prior attempts being the cata-
logue of the South Kensington Museum and that
of the Bethnal Green Exhibition. In the former,
all furniture of Chippendale shape made in maho-
gany was dated by the "Director," and relegated to
the latter half of the eighteenth century, while in
the other the dates seem to have been affixed from
the appearance of age, or the wood used, rather
than from the design.

The mahogany period, so far as it can be called
"Chippendale," has four very distinct styles, which,
for purposes of convenience, I have named the
Transition, the Claw and Ball, the Director, and
the Adam, the last being exemplified in the chapter
which treats of the third maker of the name. The
Transition is marked by a retention of Queen Anne
influence; the Claw and Ball by the Cupid's bow
on the top rail of the chairs and a general abandon-
ment of foreign ideas; while in the Director we find
French models in evidence, with a cessation of the
claw and ball foot, and an advance in general
lightness.

The absence of the claw-and-ball foot from
Chippendale's published designs proves that he
considered it, in 1754, too antiquated for repro-
duction. But a book like the "Director," parti-
cularly as it was the first of its kind in England,
could not have been produced in a hurry. Chipp-
dendale's third edition, comprising a large number
of new plates, was produced in between two and
three years; but, as will be shown later, there was
a definite reason for haste. It would, therefore,
seem fairly safe to give 1745 as the latest date
for the use of the claw and ball by fashionable makers.

If we put back the introduction of mahogany to about 1710, we would have thirty-five years in which the enormous number of pieces made in the first two styles, and still existing, might have been made. The furniture of these two periods was certainly not of a kind to be easily destroyed, except through wanton carelessness; but, looking at the probabilities, it is difficult to shorten the time and account satisfactorily for the number extant. If we are to accept the candle-box theory we are faced with what seems an impossibility. It would take some years to import and season sufficient mahogany to affect the production of the country, and no one can deny that the earliest Transition specimens were made of thoroughly seasoned wood. Admitting, for the sake of argument, the candle-box date, the use of mahogany could scarcely have become general till 1725, which would leave twenty years for the production of nearly all the furniture made in both styles. I say nearly all, because country makers were some years behind their London contemporaries, though they must also have been later in using both style and wood. Of the two styles, the Transition is much the less common, pointing to a shorter duration. This, on the other hand, may be discounted to some extent by the supposition that it was not universal. I have, therefore, held that 1725 may, as our knowledge goes, be taken as the beginning of the Claw and Ball period, and this is borne out by the only chair of the time, which
has a traditional date as well as a history. A reproduction of it is given in Miss Singleton's book, "The Furniture of Our Ancestors," where it is said to have been imported into America in 1727. It has the Cupid's bow shape of top rail, typical of the second Chippendale period. The supposed date of this chair fitted in so absolutely with my precon-
ceived theories that I unhesitatingly accepted it; but it is only fair to mention that Mr. F. S. Robinson ("English Furniture") does not do so. As the matter stands, however, Mr. Robinson is the only succeeding writer who has differed from my early dates. The earliest he does me the honour to repeat (unacknowledged) is 1745; before that he does not follow me. Mr. Litchfield, on the other hand, is at one with me in my somewhat revolutionary ideas. I never expected to convince the world; I am perfectly satisfied that such an acknowledged expert has seen reason in my arguments.

It is exceedingly doubtful if it will ever be known what share the author of the "Director" had in the formation of the style universally known by his name; nor, still more, how far the furniture of the "Transition" period was affected by his personality.

We are indebted to the research of Miss Constance Simon for several dates in connection with the Chippendale family. The great Thomas Chippendale was probably married in 1748 and died in 1779. Before that time, however, it seems likely that he had retired from business in favour of his son, who in the same year published a small book of etchings, which was brought to the present writer's knowledge by Mr. Batsford, in which the plates are signed "Thomas Chippendale, Junior." This last Thomas Chippendale lived till 1823, which effectively disposes of the legend that the Chippendale furniture of the "Director" period was indebted to him either for workmanship or design.
The Bury Settee.
Even taking into account the fact that the Chippendales seem to have been a long-lived family, the great Thomas must have been a very young man when the first wave of the new design from which the Transition style arises passed over England.

Both he and his father were at that time in Worcestershire. The famous Bury settee and chairs made for that family by "Chippendale," and for which a receipt was in existence a few years ago (which, it is to be hoped, may still be found), was probably made before the migration to London, and could therefore scarcely be supposed to have affected the designers of the Metropolis to any great extent.

The Burys, being a Worcestershire family, naturally took a pride in their local designer, and not only preserved the receipt mentioned, but the memory of the fact that Chippendale visited the house as a friend. The Chippendales, indeed, had a standing very different from what we might suppose would have been at that time accorded to a cabinet-maker, however much of an artist, who worked at the carpenter's bench with his own chisel; but it is almost unbelievable that a mere lad, not the head of the firm, should have been the guest at Knatesh Hill. The great likelihood is that, whatever share the second Chippendale had in their design, the order was given to his father.

The drawing-room at Knatesh Hill was small, and the set comprised only a settee and four chairs, this, indeed, being all for which there was room. In connection with this I have recently had the
good fortune to substantiate an interesting fact bearing on the careful preservation of some of this old furniture. Another set, comprising also a settee and four chairs of precisely the same pattern, was recently brought to my notice, the examination of which showed that both settee and chairs were numbered. The numbers ran from one to eight, but only two of the chairs had seats corresponding to their respective numbers. By the kindness of Mrs. McClure, the fortunate possessor of the Bury set, I was enabled to find that those chiselled on the seats and chairs belonging to her also only matched in two instances, while the others supplied the missing numbers; thus proving that the two sets had at some time or other been one, and that, though they had probably been in existence for over one hundred and eighty years, not a single chair or settee is missing.

As will be seen from the illustration, these are constructed on lines approaching Queen Anne design, though the interlaced splats and the form of the top rail are distinctively of the Chippendale period, even resembling chairs constructed as late as the sixties. So far as the backs are concerned, it is chiefly in the minutiae of ornament that they differ from some of these later productions. The Queen Anne makers were fond of suggesting that wood might be rolled into convolutions like parchment, while the Chippendale school, on the other hand, often looked on it as rope or ribbon, which might be interlaced or tied together.

In this set we have both distinctive peculiarities, the new being adopted while the old had still been
retained, thus forming a very suitable instance of
the methods of the late "Transition" workman.

Another minor point as regards the general
design is of considerable importance from this
point of view, for though they are only to be seen
in the reproduction by careful examination, it will
be apparent that the Queen Anne ornament—to use
an heraldic term—an "erased" eagle's head with
the beak turning to the neck, has been employed.
I illustrate a Queen Anne settee from the South Ken-
sington Museum to show the origin of the design.

The fronts of the chairs are purely Queen Anne
in shape, and the early date is again emphasised
by the fact that they are veneered. It is a mis-
take to suppose that there was no veneering in the
middle of the eighteenth century, as many other
articles of furniture were so treated; but chairs
were invariably cut from the solid.

What is, perhaps, a still more instructive speci-
men is the Chippendale armchair in the Soane
Museum, not because of the date, which is un-
fortunately lost, but on account of its being the
veritable work of Chippendale, his receipt for pay-
ment of the piece having been at one time in the
museum. In many ways this is curiously unlike
any other piece of his reputed work I have seen, and
I would be inclined, as in the case of the Bury
settee, to guess the first instead of the second Chip-
pendale as its designer. We have the shell, the
solid splat, running at its ends into a rounded scroll,
which is repeated in the sides and the front of the
arms, and the heavy Dutch cabriole leg, ending
with the claw and ball foot. At the top corners of
Chippendale Chair (The Soane Museum).
the back are two eagles' heads, from the open mouths of which the side supports proceed. These are repeated in the inner turn of the arms and the curved shape of the neck has been made clever though somewhat naturalistic use of, by substituting, for the supporting of a scroll, the action of preening a feather. There are two junctions between the splat and the sides of the back, the one by an eagle's foot holding a scroll, the other by a ribbon-like turn of the wood crossing over the front of the side rail just above the insertion of the arms. These together make the least convincing part of the design, disturbing it in a way of which the great Thomas Chippendale would have been incapable. The human faces in the top of the cabriole leg I do not remember having seen before in his work. The eagle's neck feathers on the top rail gradually change into the acanthus, but the ornament proceeding from them must not be mistaken for the "wheat-ear" (which probably dates from about 1780), being intended for some kind of fruit, the nature of which, as also of the flowers on the side rails of the back, I am not botanist enough to determine. The chair is beautifully carved and is most solidly put together, but with all its solidity it has met with considerable damage at some very distant period. The right arm is broken, and the back legs must have been irrevocably destroyed, as the present ones have evidently been added. They are skilfully let into the structure, but the pattern in the cabriole does not tally with the rest of the design. The claw and ball is of a distinctly later period, and there is an indentation running
round the leg some inches above it (scarcely showing in the reproduction) which practically proves them not to be by the same hand. The sphere is also not complete, which would seem to point to the latest years in which the design was used; yet it may also be accounted for on the supposition that these legs were originally longer, but cut down to suit their present position.

Chippendale’s ribbon back chairs, which have met with such abuse, but which are now so highly prized, began probably in the later second period, somewhere between 1730 and 1735, for the earliest specimens, like the illustration, have claw and ball feet; later we find them with the sweep of the cabriole leg still more simplified and greatly lightened in make, which, fine as the others are, seems more consistent with the delicacy—one might almost say effeminacy—of the central idea. It is also purer from the point of view of design, for the “fluttering ribbon” was admittedly of French origin, and could scarcely be expected to consort perfectly with the heavy Dutch cabriole. In its proper place this leg is quite admirable, but for other purposes there is a show of too much actual strength. On seeing a ribbon back chair one instinctively thinks of the ladies of the period with their fans, powdered hair, and patches, and it is a little out of place to add a leg to it which would bear the strain of a Daniel Lambert, or, in a moment of sudden bodily danger, form a most serviceable club.

Mr. L. Redgrave, in his “Dictionary of Artists,” states that Thomas Chippendale came to London
in the reign of George I., and, supporting himself by working as a joiner, gradually made a name in the higher branches of his profession. I am not aware that there is any evidence in proof of this assertion, but it is far from being inherently unlikely, if we substitute the word “carver” for “joiner.” The first Chippendale had already a business which must have been of a high class in his native county. Of him we know practically nothing, apart from the facts that he had a considerable social status and was undoubtedly a most finished and capable workman. His son, on the other hand, was of the stuff from which pioneers are made. It was no small thing to have been the first Englishman to publish such a book as the “Director,” and we can well imagine how the ambitious young man, with the absolute belief in himself which we know he possessed, should have considered that Worcestershire was too small a field to give full play to his powers; whereas his father, having already an established business, would be most unlikely to leave it until he felt convinced that he was not exchanging the substance for the shadow. If we accept this view, Thomas Chippendale came to London, like Sheraton, many years later, to make his fortune; but, unlike him, he had the possibility of being strongly backed once his feet were on firm ground. He can, therefore, barely be looked upon as a self-made man, though he certainly formed a business which was probably the greatest of his day, seeing that, in 1776, he received a payment from a single customer of £1,800.
CHAPTER II.

THE AIMS OF THE "DIRECTOR."

There is one fact about Chippendale's designs which he himself impresses on us. It is that his work is intended for all classes. In his title page he says that his designs are "calculated to improve and refine the present taste, and suited to the fancy and circumstances of persons in all degrees of life."

Again, in his preface, he says, "I am confident I can convince all noblemen, gentlemen, or others who will honour me with their commands."

As a matter of fact the list of his subscribers embraces all classes—from the Duke of Northumberland to William Frank, bricklayer.

This would not be so extraordinary now as it was in Chippendale's own day. Most of the previous great furniture designers had worked for the noble, or at least for the rich, and in the early and middle ages there were practically two classes, the rich and the poor.

Immense prices were paid for single pieces of furniture by the Romans when at the height of their prosperity. Cicero gave a million sesterces (£9,000) for a table, and another is mentioned as
being sold by auction for £10,000. Another table, which was carried by the Goths into Spain in the fifth century, was surrounded with three rows of fine pearls. It must have been of considerable size, as it was supported by no less than 365 feet, the feet being of "massy gold," inlaid with gems. This table was valued at five hundred thousand pieces of gold. All through the middle ages the great difference between class and class tended to the extremes of rude simplicity and barbaric grandeur. In England the Normans found art, and indeed society, in a very backward condition. The Anglo-Saxon house was not only a one-storied structure, it consisted of one room, in which there was but little furniture, and where the inhabitants slept on the great dining-table. It is therefore not at all surprising that for several centuries designers should consider only the Church and the nobles. Thomas Chippendale, though not the first, was at least one of the first, of the great designers to make furniture for the million in a sound commercial as well as artistic manner.

Had it not been for the growing prosperity of the country he could scarcely have done so, but England was rapidly rising both in taste and circumstances. Comfort, too, was more thought of, and from being greatly below, our middle classes had become almost as much above, those of some of the older civilizations. In 1743 Horace Walpole wrote from Newmarket: "I am writing to you in an inn on the road to London. What a paradise should I have thought this when I was in Italian inns! in a wide barn with four ample windows,
THE AIMS OF THE "DIRECTOR."

which had nothing more like glass than shutters and iron bars! no tester to the bed, and the saddles and portmanteaus heaped on me to keep off the cold. What a paradise did I think the inn at Dover when I came back! and what magnificence were twopenny prints, salt cellars, and boxes to hold the knives, but the *summum bonum* was small beer and the newspaper."

In another letter, eighteen years later, he describes how he has been bored at Haughton during his election campaign. "Yet to do the folks justice," he goes on, "they are sensible, reasonable, and civilised; their very language is polished since I lived among them." He refers to a period only sixteen years before, and he certainly had not, meanwhile, become more charitable to people beneath him in station.

When Chippendale published his "Director," he had therefore the opportunity of appealing not only to a richer but a far more appreciative middle and lower middle class than had ever existed in England before. It is possible, too, that belonging to the shopkeeper class, he understood their wants, and took a certain pride in catering for them. It has been far too customary in most times and countries to regard shopkeepers as hopelessly bourgeois—the essence of respectability without taste. But Chippendale belonged to a time when men who were either shopkeepers themselves, or the sons of shopkeepers, were second to none in both art and literature. Pope and Defoe must both have died while he was working. Hogarth, his neighbour in St. Martin's Lane, was by far our
best artist. Johnson was the recognised authority in literature, while Richardson's novels were being translated into almost every European language. The lower middle class were not, of course, all Popes and Hogarths any more than they are to-day, but the many names which stand out in such bold relief show the great growth of taste.

Chippendale by no means confined himself to the simple or the cheap. Indeed, he tells us himself that some of his designs have been called so many "specious drawings," "particularly those after the Gothic and Chinese manner." The evident answer would have been to say that he had executed them. Instead, he shows that many of his designs were simply trade advertisements, by saying that he could not only produce them but better them in production if anyone gave him an order. There are certainly some designs in his book which it is difficult to believe that Chippendale would have produced as drawn. One of the most remarkable of these is a sofa, on the top of which, seated on a cloud, a cherub reclines, while at each side birds are perched. One of these birds has its beak well in front of the back of the sofa, and we wonder which part Chippendale, usually so careful as to comfort, meant as a rest for the head. It is a showy drawing, but it is neither peculiarly good as a piece of design nor fitted for its intended use, a somewhat rare thing in this craftsman's work.

Few artists have been more unfortunate in their critics than Thomas Chippendale. He is accused of almost every vice possible to the designer. Theft is one of the chief crimes imputed to him, and it must
THE AIMS OF THE "DIRECTOR."
be admitted that in many of his "French" designs there is nothing new in the treatment. But he honestly calls them what they are, and makes no parade of originality. Mr. Heaton accused him, among other things, of two faults: of stealing the claw and ball foot from the French, and of the bad structural quality in the designs of his riband back chairs. These are fair samples of the imputed crimes. Now let us examine them. The French took the claw and ball foot from the Dutch, and the Dutch, the great traders of the day, took it from China, where it has existed for about 1,700 years. Neither was there any necessity for going to France for it, as it was used extensively in England from the accession of William and Mary. Moreover, the claw and ball is never used in the "Director," of which period, except for this adverse criticism, Mr. Heaton exclusively treated.

The introduction of animal life into design is of immense antiquity, having been freely used by palæolithic man to the exclusion of ideas taken from plants and flowers. When chairs and couches came to be made, their four legs naturally suggested the quadruped. In ancient Egypt, for instance, couches were made with the head of an animal at one end and its tail at the other, while the legs and feet were carved to correspond. If mere age can give respectability, the use of animals in design is deserving of the greatest veneration, for it is found in every one of the older civilizations, from the Egyptians and the Assyrians to the Jews, Greeks, and Romans. Yet it savours, somehow, of barbarism. It is suggestive of the savage, who in plants and trees recog-
nises only the cover through which he may stalk his prey.

It will be seen by the illustrations given of early "Chippendale" style that considerable use was made, among other things, of the claw and ball foot, and it is therefore all the more remarkable that in the "Director," though there are two instances of an animal's paw (seemingly a leopard's) with part of a sphere underneath, the dragon's claw holding a pearl entirely disappears, and with it, to a very great extent, the adaptation of animals to design. Several are still left, including the long-beaked bird used also by his contemporaries, but they bear such a small proportion to the whole that they chiefly emphasise the change of taste. In succeeding designers such instances became rarer and rarer, until Sheraton, who had till then been working on somewhat severe lines, published his last book, in which dromedaries, lions, etc., are reproduced with an attempt at absolute realism.

With regard to the accusation of stealing, it appears to me that a great deal too much is often made of the point. What benefit is it to an artist to be "heir of all the ages" if he is compelled to forget all he learns? If originality existed only in the eccentric or unusual, the progress of art would be slow indeed. From that point of view Chippendale, in common with nearly every other artist or designer of note, would have no claim to originality, as he is almost always evidently and openly influenced—and sometimes more than merely influenced—by previous or contemporary work. As Mr. Kipling phrases it, "what he
thought he might require, he went and took." It never struck him to suppose that there was property in an idea. He made the world at large, and other craftsmen in particular, a present of his designs, and treated other designers as he expected and, indeed, hoped, to be treated himself. The question is not if he took from others, but if, on the whole, he superimposed on the ideas so taken that indefinable impress of mind which is above and beyond all possibilities of the merely eccentric.

The riband back in chairs was not his own idea. Both he and other London furniture makers of his time took them from the French. Chippendale was no inventor. He was an adapter pure and simple, yet when it suits his critics to do so, he is as readily accused of originating what he adapted as of stealing it. This lack of invention is very strongly marked in his work. Chippendale not only did not help in the evolution of the sideboard, but actually retarded it. Sideboards had been made with drawers even in his own day, but he left them entirely out.

He must also have seen many specimens of the dressoir, and he most assuredly must have been aware of what was going on around him. Comfort he certainly studied, as, for instance, in his chairs; but with regard to the sideboard, it must be allowed he did not pay the same attention to convenience.

Here is what another critic says about his flamboyant carving, particularly his frames and girandoles. According to him they are composed of "intemperately flowing lines, wantonly twisting volutes, fantastic and unmeaning forms."
French Chair. From the "Director."
The two sides of the designs are seldom alike, symmetry is ostentatiously avoided, everything twists, twirls, and writhes, changes, gets distorted, like the images in a dyspeptic dream over a book of travel, from which the reader will be glad to awake."

There is, undoubtedly, some truth in this criticism, except the blame that is bestowed in the avoidance of symmetry, a point for which such careful students as Mr. Litchfield give praise instead of blame. Chippendale frames and girandoles would be as hopelessly out of place in modern environments as the dress and customs of his time. There is more, however, than a mere association of historical ideas between them and the paint, patches, wigs, and costumes of the eighteenth century. Then everything, even the language, was more or less ornate. A gentleman bowed to a lady in a way which would now be considered a bad caricature of a French dancing-master, and the courtesy in return would be only less laughable as possessing less gesticulatory movement. The young man of to-day may prefer tweed suits and bowler hats to uncomfortably stiffened coat-skirts, embroidered waistcoats, and three-cornered head-gear. He throws a plain silver cigarette case to a friend, who catches it as if it were a cricket ball; even among his intimates, his great grandfather proffered an enamelled or be-diamonded snuff-box in much the same manner with which he took a lady's hand in a minuet.

We must not condemn an artist for being true to the conventionalities of his time. Most of us have,
Girandole. From the "Director."
and cannot help having, a liking for one particular style; but the office of the critic is not to pour abuse on the style but to say whether a design in any particular style is well or badly carried out. We have only carefully to compare Thomas Chippendale's work with that which was going on around him to see that in furniture he was the master mind of his time. Lock might easily be, and, indeed, has been, mistaken for Chippendale. So close is the resemblance that we even have the same impossible long-headed and crested bird usually supposed to be a sort of Chippendale trade-mark. In Ince and Mahew and in Mainwaring we can see varying degrees of resemblance; and Johnson, who has been severely left alone by the critics, gives us more "wantonly twisting volutes and fantastic unmeaning forms" than exist in the whole publications of the period. To arrive at any real conception of the sanity of Chippendale's mind it is necessary to know what was being produced by his contemporaries and received by the public. To modern eyes there is certainly eccentricity; but it is the eccentricity of the time, not of the man. There is no attempt in all his book to produce anything new. He had no special theory to preach, but was perfectly contented with existing forms of convention. In his own words his designs are "calculated to improve and refine the present taste"; but there is no attempt at altering it by invention.

The introduction of the taste for Chinese furniture into England has been wrongly attributed both to Chippendale and to Sir W. Chambers. The latter, who had himself visited China and made a
host of careful studies, published a book in 1757, which was afterwards translated into French. This, however, was three years after the publication of the "Director," and though it undoubtedly kept the taste alive, and was, as coming from a traveller and an architect, immensely purer in style than any other European attempts, could scarcely have influenced either of the two first editions of Chippendale's book. It is much more likely that he took what already existed around him.

The world was a wonderfully small place even before steam and telegraphy. As early as the end of the sixteenth century curiosities from Asia were eagerly collected, and oriental carpets, objects from "Yndie," and porcelain from China were common in the shops of Cairo. The Dutch also imported much Chinese work, though, as a great deal of it was made to the order of ignorant ship captains, it was sometimes of a very mixed character, incongruities, like views of Dutch cities and landscapes, being freely introduced. Such as it was, it still became fashionable, and remained so for about a century. Chippendale's ideas, both on the country and its art, were curiously inaccurate. In one instance he gives a plate entitled a Chinese Cabinet, while in his letterpress he describes it as an India Cabinet, Chinese and Indian being apparently to him synonymous terms. There is not much to be said in favour of the specimens he gives in the "Director," except that he did not, like Chambers, publish them with an apology, which he afterwards found it convenient to forget.
CHAPTER III.

A FORGERY.

The commercial side of Chippendale's character, though undeniably very strongly marked, scarcely deserves the virulent criticisms it has received. Art for art's sake is a beautiful dream; but, as Society is ordered now, it necessarily stops at the dream stage. The instances of men who, possessing considerable private means, have done anything great in art are so rare as to be practically non-existent, while there is no instance which I can call to my memory of such a man having made a great departure from recognised lines. The best art work of the world, and the most original, has always been done by the man who worked for his living. At first sight this seems strange, but it is not so when we come to consider the question more closely. The man who is born to rank and fortune is also born to duties which it should be impossible for him to put in a secondary place. It would ill become the noble or the large landed proprietor to give the management of his estates and the treatment of his tenantry to underlings, or to leave public affairs to others, while he dreamt his life away in the privacy of a studio. If he possessed
brains and energy enough to become a great artist, he could certainly also have made his mark in politics, and if, through lack of these qualities, he was unfitted for affairs, the world would be no richer for his artistic efforts.

If Vandyke is to be believed, Charles I. might have been a great artist. He certainly could, as he himself boasted, have made his living by the work of his hands if he had not been king, and as certainly he was a great critic, for, among other things, he believed in and honoured Vandyke, when his own countrymen would have none of him. It would have been happier for Charles personally, and, except that evil came out of good, better for everybody concerned had he devoted himself to art and left the government of the country alone; but he would not have been worthy of even the modified respect we give him now had he not, mistaken as he was, attempted to do what he conceived to be his duty.

The painter, therefore, who breaks away from the usual, and in doing so produces really great works, is, almost of necessity, a poor, or at least not a rich, man. There may be a terrible struggle at first. He may paint, like Rembrandt, in an old mill, and, if his genius is great enough, make his very disadvantages tell in his favour; but, sooner or later, without the patron, his work must of necessity come to an end. The labourer is worthy of his hire; but his hire will certainly not be a "living wage" if he does not either produce what the many want, or find the few who want what he produces. Even Raphael could not have departed
so much from former conventions had he not been backed by the Medici. An artist; moreover, is tied down by his own previous work. Rembrandt, who went on improving to the day of his death, fell latterly upon evil days. He was forsaken by his patrons for Bol, a fourth-rate artist who had formed his style on a period of Rembrandt's works which the buyers could understand.

The crumpled rose-leaf of one of our own great artists is that he cannot sell a picture which has no marble in it. "I tell them," he says, "that it is not real marble, only studio marble; but they will not believe me." Few, indeed, will marvel at the unbelief, but the fact goes to show how dependent an artist of the most assured position is on the taste—or want of it—of the general public.

In literature it is different, for an appreciation of it is a necessary part of education; but where there are millions who can form a tolerably correct estimate of a book, there are only hundreds—thousands at most—who are as capable in art matters. "I don't know what is good; I only know what I like," is the ordinary picture-buyer's confession of faith.

If this is so in an art which, from its nature, can only be made commercially successful by an appeal to the few, how much more is it the case when it is not the few that are catered for, but the million? Chippendale spared no expense in producing the "Director," except where by differentiating one side of the design from the other he gives two or more possibilities in the same plate, or where, as in his mirrors, he only gives half the design, ideas
common to his contemporaries. Every plate is well produced in line by capable engravers, and, as will be seen by a glance at the original editions, they were not "commercially" but artistically printed, being "flushed" where necessary. All this must have cost a very considerable sum of money, more, indeed, than Chippendale could have reasonably hoped to gain by the mere sale of the book. It was a trade catalogue on a gigantic scale, and he looked for his profits from the advertisement of his wares. Had he spent, as some of his critics seem to have wished him to, several hundreds of hard-earned money in showing the public what they did not but in his opinion ought to want, he should have been shut up by his friends in a lunatic asylum, as being incapable of managing his business. I have no means of judging with accuracy what the cost of producing the "Director" may have been. At present, for merely printing the plates in the same style, without paper, a moderate estimate would be twenty-five or thirty shillings. Add to this the cost of engraving plates, the paper, binding, letterpress, etc., the time employed in making the drawings—reckoned at carver's wages—and considering that he could only receive the full three-and-a-half guineas* for such copies as he himself sold, we cannot help being impressed with the fact that no tradesman would be justified, from a business point of view, in preaching an absolutely new gospel at such expense. Like any other reasonable shopkeeper, he advertised such wares

* He supplied copies of the "Director" to the furniture trade at £1 14s. 6d.
as experience showed would sell, without pretending to originality.

Mr. Heaton is Chippendale's most severe, and I might almost say unfair, critic. According to him Chippendale's beds, for instance, are "miracles of false and foolish taste." From a health point of view this may be true, and some of the four posters are certainly approaching the ridiculous; but surely a critic who wished to be fair would have added a saving clause regarding his beautifully designed, and as beautifully carved, bed-posts.

On Chippendale's commercial side he speaks, if possible, more strongly. He calls him "a very commonplace and vulgar hawker of his wares, prepared to make anything that will please his customers and fill his purse." And again, "his desire to pander to any trumpery fancy of the hour, now so-called 'Chinese,' now extravagant Louis Quatorze, now 'Churchwarden's Gothic,' led him into continual trouble; for, going carefully through the third edition (which does not differ materially from the first) and, with every desire to be fair and broad-minded, dividing the designs into four groups, one comes to such result as this—Good, 60; Passable (i.e., designs with merit in them, but partially spoiled by false detail), 103; Fantastic and foolish, 146; with a remainder of 107, which can only be called preposterous, impossible, or outrageous. That is to say, the good and passable are scarcely as two to three of the others."

This is somewhat high-handed criticism, even when careful study has been given to the "Director," which, in Mr. Heaton's case, as I shall
presently show, there are the greatest reasons for doubting. At the moment, what I wish to impress on my readers is that Chippendale was not an artist in the sense of having received an artistic education; he was a skilled carver who designed

![Chippendale Chair belonging to Mr. Letts.](image)

his own furniture. A handicap from which his book necessarily suffers is the fact that line engraving was the only practical method of giving his designs to the public. I yield to no one in my appreciation of fine line engraving, but, except in the very best hands, it lends itself more to
mechanical exactness than to artistic feeling. The men who engraved for Chippendale and his contemporaries were not, and could not have been, at the head of their profession, or they could easily have obtained more lucrative work elsewhere, and, as the work had to be done as much as possible on a commercial basis, they used mechanical appliances wherever possible. There was no time, however capable they might have been, to attempt the higher artistic excellences of line. The engravings, therefore, give but a very poor idea of what the work really was when Chippendale's chisel had been applied to it, or, indeed, the artistic merits of the original sketch. By the courtesy of Mr. S. E. Letts, I reproduce a "French" chair, probably by Chippendale's own hand, and, for purposes of comparison, the same chair as engraved in the "Director." The design, giving, as it does, several different possibilities, is lopsided and unconvincing as a piece of art: but the actual chair is, as will be seen, very different from the impression that merely cursory study of the engraving would leave on the mind. There is no mention in Mr. Heaton's book of Chippendale's early work, though it is generally held that the time of the "Director" was not his finest period. This may be forgiven, as he confined himself with Chippendale, as with others, to published designs; but his treatment of the "Director" calls for notice, if only because it is disquieting to the mind to have one of the acknowledged authorities at utter variance with one's opinions. I admit, therefore, to a certain feeling of relief on finding that
Mr. Heaton seems to be the only critic who has fallen into a certain clumsily set trap.

There is an undated book to be found in South Kensington Museum, catalogued, unfortunately, as Chippendale, but to which a printed label is affixed, declaring it to be "Chippendale's Designs for Sconces, Chimney & Looking-glass frames, In the Old French Style, Adapted for Carvers & Gilders, Fashionable and Ornamental Cabinet Makers, Modellers, etc. 11 Plates. Price 7½."* There is no publisher's name, no frontispiece, no letterpress of any kind, and the plates themselves bear neither the name of designer nor engraver. These facts of themselves should have made experts suspicious of them, and, indeed, very few writers mention them. They are not forgeries, because there is no name attached, and, as far as I can find out, it is impossible to say with certainty who affixed the label. There can, however, be little doubt that they were published by J. Weale at some date prior to 1834, at which time he published another book of supposed Chippendale designs. His immunity from harm in the former venture led him this time into what is perhaps the most daring and brazen piece of literary forgery extant. There are numerous instances of imitations of various authors being passed off as their absolute work. The names of Chatterton and Macpherson come naturally to the mind. But, as far as my knowledge goes, no one has ever before taken an important book, published only about eighty years previously, and re-issued it as by another author. Mr. John Weale's assur-

* This has, since my first published notice of it, been altered in the catalogue.
Weale's Title-Page.
ance did not stop at this. He had by some mis-
chance evidently got the old plates engraved for
T. Johnson's book into his possession, and having
already used some of them in his tentative venture
without being found out, he went even farther in
this. The signature "T. Johnson" has been
stoned out on each plate and "T. Chippendale"
engraved in. It is practically Johnson's entire
book with the plates arranged differently. There
is no doubt that this book was done from Johnson's
original plates, as each graver-line is exact. In
1834 men knew little about Chippendale, and, in all
probability, nothing whatever about Johnson, so
the book passed muster; but how it comes that it
has escaped the attention of the numerous recent
writers on the furniture of the period is difficult to
understand. Mr. Weale was nothing if not
thorough. He took the frontispiece of Johnson's
book, stoned out the title, leaving the design, and
in the spaces where Johnson's title formerly stood
he engraved "Chippendale's One Hundred and
Thirty-three Designs of Interior Decorations in the
Old French and Antique Styles, for Carvers, Cabinet
Makers, Ornamental Painters, Brass Workers,
Modellers, Chasers, Silversmiths, General Designers,
and Architects. London, Published by John
Weale, No. 59, High Holborn. 1834."
He was careful of his money, this John Weale.
Having already gone to the expense of obliterating
the names and lettering on the former eleven plates,
he does not waste his substance recklessly by put-
ting them in again. Nay, further, he saves where
he can in the mere numbering, and plates 6, 7, and
First Plate in Weale's Undated Book.
8 of the undated book keep the same places in this, while the others are inserted at the end with the numbers still unaltered. This must have paid, for he published yet another edition of it in 1858–9, but with several additions and under another title. This time it is "Old English and French Ornament," and the names given are Chippendale, Inigo Jones, Johnson, Lock, and Pether. Curiously enough, Chippendale is the only one of these who is conspicuous by his absence, though the greater part of the plates bear his name. There are also some new frontispieces by Pether, Lock, etc., but the original from Johnson, which I give in both its forms, is still used. It is amusing to note that the person who is peeping round the corner and stealing British ideas is a French designer, as shown by the *fleur-de-lys* on the scroll he carries in his hand. It is evidently in the nature of a *tu quoque*, though why it should be thought such a disgrace to graft the art of one country on another I cannot imagine. It is the very essence and history of art, and there was just as little need for Johnson's rejoinder as there is for Mr. Heaton's waste of capitals when he denounces Chippendale's style as FRENCH.

If a critic did not have a right to state his opinions criticism would cease. Neither can mistakes be altogether avoided, and the writer hopes to live long enough to make many more; but where criticism practically begins and ends with finding fault it is incumbent on the critic to be specially careful of his facts.

The two later publications I mention are not
Lock's Title-Page.
noticed, as far as I am aware, by anyone, but the first, without date and without a proper title, has been used as another stone by Mr. Heaton. "Later," he says, "he (Chippendale) published a quarto book of designs (undated) for 'sconces, chimney and looking-glass frames in the old French style' (the only place in which I can find any acknowledgment of his indebtedness to the French) which is at once commonplace, vulgar, and largely impracticable."

Now there are no less than ten designs of "French" chairs in the "Director," so called by Chippendale. He used the word, of course, as commonly employed to describe a chair with a stuffed back; but it was called French because it was French, and Chippendale, aware of the fact, made no attempt to hide it. Plate xxxii. in the third edition is, he tells us, "two designs of couches, or what the French call Péché Mortel." There are also numerous "French commode tables," which are so described, and I cannot see how these do not constitute an "acknowledgment of indebtedness."

Of the eleven designs that occasioned the remark not one is by Chippendale. There is a faint family resemblance, for his was the master mind, and he influenced every worker of his time; but were it not capable of actual proof one ought to be fairly certain, on studying them closely, that his hand had nothing to do with their production. For this small book the frontispiece of Lock's "Six Sconces," with the title stoned out, is used as the first plate, and the other five follow. The remainder are all
from Johnson's book, and, though a certain amount of care has been taken to select the saner examples, they are still distinctly Johnson, who deserves the greater part of the adverse criticism given vicariously to Chippendale. As regards Lock's designs I cannot agree. To me they seem not only practicable but dainty, and, considering the flamboyant style of the period, even reserved.

After all, one does not throw stones at a dwarf.
Mr. Heaton passes over Johnson in some half dozen lines, and even Lock in not many more. Perhaps the correct way for the Chippendale lover to take his scathing criticisms is as a somewhat too carefully veiled compliment to the greatness of the man by whose name this period of English furniture always has been and always will be known.
CHAPTER IV.

THE GOTHIC REVIVAL.

The most persistent of all ideas is the religious or semi-religious. The religion itself may be dead, but ideas connected with it seem to be as eternal as it is in the nature of human things to be. The Christian steeple and the Mahommedan dome are both emblems of an immensely older creed. Mr. Laing tells us that the northern term-day "Beltan" is really Baal-tien, i.e., the fire of Baal. Bonfires are still lit at Beltan, and it is the custom to leap through them. Mr. Laing and many other people, including the present writer, have thus "passed through the fire unto Baal," without a single suspicion that they were celebrating a heathen rite, which held much the same place in the ancient sun-worship as baptism in the Christian Church. If this is so with a long-forgotten religion, how much more is it the case with a church, which in older times moulded the destinies of Europe, and which is still a great living factor in the affairs of men.

We may think that we are so thoroughly Protestant as not to be influenced in any way by the older creed, but there are almost countless instances to the contrary. We do not eat horse flesh, at one
time a regular article of food in Europe, because the horse, being sacred to Odin, was eaten at his feasts, and thus came to be the distinguishing mark of the northern heathen. It was therefore forbidden as Christian food by a papal bull, which is more religiously observed at the present day than it was on its promulgation. We teach our boys Latin, and tell them that we do so in order that they may understand their own language. In France, Italy, or Spain, this would be good argument, but we, if logical, should also teach them the old Teutonic tongues, ignorance of which makes Johnson’s dictionary, so far as derivations are concerned, a useless monument of one-sided education. Nor is it from the literary point of view that Latin is taught. Not one man in ten thousand comes to reading it with such ease and knowledge that he can really appreciate the turn of a phrase or the choice of words, yet a few months spent in reading translations would, to the average man, give a far better general idea of classic literature. It is notorious, for instance, that Keats obtained his knowledge of and his love for it through the medium of translations. The fact is that Latin is not, except colloquially, a dead language. It is kept alive by the ritual of the Church of Rome, and is used every week by many millions all over the globe, and as long as the Church exists Latin will probably remain a necessary part of education.

It is scarcely possible to speak of the influence of the Roman Church on art without alluding to the virulent criticisms which abound through our writers and historians, most of which are levelled at her
A Gothic Bookcase. From the "Director."
methods of obtaining money. As it was the possession of wealth that made it possible for her to save art in Europe, which would otherwise most certainly have died, it is not a fact to be very deeply regretted from the artistic, or perhaps even from the historical, point of view, for whatever use may have been made of part of her revenues, much of it, possibly by far the greater part, was applied to far better uses than if it had remained in the hands of its original owners. In very early times the Church discovered, or thought she discovered, that mere learning and piety were not of themselves enough to give her real power in the state, and she allowed herself, probably slowly at first, to amass riches. When the barbarian hordes poured into Italy she became still richer, for, with some of the civilization and most of the vices of the Romans, they also adopted their religion, and, truly barbaric in both superstition and generosity, inundated her with propitiatory gifts. Unless the Church had then and there made a vow of poverty, it was impossible to avoid becoming immensely wealthy without giving offence to converts, too new and too dangerous to be treated cavalierly.

That great riches also brought great abuses is only what might have been expected. Monarchies were, to some extent, saved from the worst consequences of ambition by the principle of hereditary succession. In the Church this could not exist, and, in a turbulent and venal age, it was naturally the worst men who grasped at power and personal aggrandisement without any scruple as to the method of attaining them.
THE GOTHIC REVIVAL.

It is of such abuses that our writers chiefly speak. Nor are their criticisms altogether fair. Careful historians like Hallam, and men steeped in legendary lore like Scott, practically accuse the Church of inventing the doctrine of purgatory in order to obtain money under false pretences. They either never knew or conveniently forgot that the dogma is of Jewish origin, and was adopted by the early Church on the highest authority.

The system of fines and penances is probably as old as the oldest ordered society, and pertains to this day in our police courts, even to the extent of such fines going to the expenses of the court imposing them. These fines, however, even when most abused, could only have been a very small part of the Church's income. Even under Pagan emperors she was permitted to hold estates, a principle foreign to Roman law, by which a tenure of lands in mortmain was not allowed. In many instances, as on the Scottish border, large tracts of land were given to the Church, as the only method of saving them from national enemies, and, as each man who joined an order brought his goods with him, the flow of wealth into her coffers was incessant, and almost boundless. Add to this the fact, admitted by her most severe critics, that prudent management of her estates largely increased her revenue, and we cease to wonder at her immense riches and power.

From the artistic point of view, however, the question is not so much how she obtained her wealth as the use it was put to. By a capitulary of Charlemagne, tithes were divided into three
parts: one for the bishop and his clergy, another for the poor, and a third for the support of the fabric of the Church. This, it is supposed, was founded on what was already the practice, and, though it alludes only to tithes, was probably more or less applied to the entire income. It would certainly have been out of the question that the magnificent cathedrals bequeathed to us could have been raised on a third part of the tithes, which were necessarily largely payable in kind.

It was not only the wealth of the Church that made her greatest works possible; it was the continuity of her existence. Dynasties might perish at any moment through invasion or failure of heirs, but an order, to the men who were in it, seemed eternal. It mattered not how many years a piece of work might require for its completion. No man might see both the beginning and the end, but the work went on, nevertheless, for private ambition as well as private life was lost in the order.

For several centuries, therefore, the Church remained the undisputed arbitress of style, and it was not until the Medici acquired their great wealth that the Renaissance became possible. This was not a revolt against religious influence; it was simply a reversion to an older form, an occurrence several times repeated in history. The Renaissance spread slowly over Europe, but Italy was its true home.

"The circumstances of the Italian noble," says Mr. Litchfield, "caused him to be very amenable to art influence. Living chiefly out of doors, his
Gothic Bed. From the "Director."
climate rendered him less dependent on the comforts of small rooms, to which more northern people were attached, and his ideas would naturally incline toward pomp and elegance rather than to home life and utility. Instead of the warm chimney corner and the uncomfortable seat, he preferred furniture of a more palatial character for the adornment of the lofty and spacious saloons of his palace. The cabinet designed with architectural outline, and fitted up inside with steps and pillars like a temple; chairs which are wonderful to look upon as guardians of a stately doorway, but uninviting as seats; tables inlaid, gilded, and carved, with slabs of marble or of Florentine mosaic work, but which, from their height, are as a rule impossible to use for any domestic purpose; mirrors with richly carved and gilded frames; these are all so many evidences of a style which is palatial rather than domestic, in design as in proportion."

England, for climatic reasons, was the country for which the style of the Renaissance was least adapted, and it was the last to which it came. When it did arrive, it had passed through so many countries, and came to us from so many sources, that the resulting "Tudor" style was barely recognisable as its outcome. It was modified, too, by the change of customs which was going on. The lord no longer dined with his retainers, and smaller rooms were a natural result, necessitating a similar change in furniture. The great gallery was still kept, for the noble lady of England valued her complexion above her health, and it was there that she chiefly took exercise. There was but little furni-
ture in it, however, and by far the greater part, bulky as they are to our ideas, are small in comparison with the Italian.

Fine as much of the work of this period is, it is impossible not to regret that the alliance between it and the architecture suggesting it is so close. Chests, cabinets, and tables were palpably imitations of stone and lime structures. Arches and columns have a distinct use when applied to buildings, where the immense weight of the material employed necessitates mechanical contrivances for its support. In wood it is different. The design may be eminently suited for a façade, but it is not convincing to the mind in the lighter material. What a man can easily lift does not require to be buttressed up and supported with mock appliances as if it weighed many tons. It is not only structurally wrong; it gives the mind a false idea. One can barely help feeling that the cabinet, chest, or whatever the article may be, is hewn out of stone and painted over to resemble wood. Despite its colour, it looks as if it would be cold to the touch, and is not associated in the mind with the warmth and comfort of a home. Yet it is perhaps preferable to the Gothic, which, from its ecclesiastical character and associations and its lack of comfort, is possibly even less fitted for the family circle. In England this latter style died gradually out till nothing of it was left. Across the border its end was even more sudden.

The Reformation, which gave Scotland her parish schools—institutions unmatched in the history of the world until quite recently—and led eventually
to her great prosperity, killed the Gothic, and, for the matter of that, all art at a single blow. The ruthless iconoclasm of the followers of Knox swept the land of all its finest cathedrals and abbeys. Whatever was beautiful and, still more, whatever was Gothic, savoured of the Scarlet Woman. Their churches were barns, and they built and placed their houses without any attention either to the beauties of nature or architecture. In architecture it could barely be otherwise, for the poverty of the country until the end of the eighteenth century, as compared with her prosperity now, is almost unbelievable. Yet, curiously enough, it was Scotland who gave England her two greatest eighteenth century architects, Chambers and Adam; both of them, be it remarked, exponents of the classic style.

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century there was an attempted Gothic revival in England, which is almost wholly attributable to Horace Walpole. He was an ardent collector, and though not a scientific still a respectable antiquarian. He undoubtedly had taste and taste of a high description, but he was an antiquarian first and an artist after. Anything that was old or curious appealed to him. He was a born collector, and he collected everything. "Every apartment," says Macaulay, "is a museum, every piece of furniture a curiosity; there is something strange in the form of the shovel; there is a long story belonging to the bell-rope. We wander among a profusion of rarities, of trifling intrinsic value, but so quaint in fashion, or connected with such remarkable names and events, that they may well detain our attention for a
moment. . . . One cabinet of trinkets is no sooner closed than another is opened."

One does not, of course, expect absolutely fair criticism from Macaulay. There is a substratum

of truth in what he says; but he did very scant justice to either the taste or judgment of this collector. It may be of interest to mention that among the unconsidered trifles whose "intrinsic value" Macaulay scoffs at, was a collection of
prints of English portraits. Walpole, in a letter to a friend, thus bewails their exorbitant price: "I have been collecting them above thirty years, and originally never gave for a mezzotint above one or two shillings. The lowest are now a crown; most from half a guinea to a guinea."

As Kent, Ware and others had kept the heavier classic school alive, and as Horace was nothing if not original, his choice in architecture would naturally lie between Gothic and Tudor, and it is easily understood why he should have decided in favour of the former. Its greater age, and, in particular, the veneration given it from its connection with the Church, would naturally bias such a mind in its favour. As I have attempted to point out, a Gothic revival, from the merely historical point of view, was, sooner or later, a certainty, and Horace Walpole was a man of whom such an attempt might almost have been predicted.

To put his theories into practice, which, to do his memory justice, he did at great expense and inconvenience to himself, he built Strawberry Hill, "that" (to quote again from Macaulay) "trumpery piece of ginger-bread Gothic" with "piecrust battlements" and "pinnacles of lath and plaster." In his worship of antiquity he certainly made some bad blunders. There was a mantelpiece from a tomb in Westminster Abbey, and a ceiling—of all things—from another at Canterbury. Formed on such models it is not surprising that much of the interior had an ecclesiastical air; and he himself tells how the French Ambassador, on being shown one of the rooms, instantly re-
moved his hat, supposing that he had entered a chapel.

Re-introduced to the world by such an acknowledged authority as Horace Walpole, Gothic archi-

tecture and Gothic furniture immediately became the rage. Not only Chippendale but most of his contemporaries were drawn into the vortex, while, several years later, Walpole actually succeeded in
persuading Robert Adam, the great exponent of
the classic, to design a Gothic room for him, which
says much for the power of his personality.

I have said nothing about Chippendale's Gothic
because, from my point of view, there is but little
to say. I have simply attempted to apologise for
its existence. I give my readers examples of it
taken from the "Director," and leave them to
judge for themselves.

It has always been a subject of regret to me that
Walpole did not wait another few years before build-
ing Strawberry Hill, for, beginning it when he did,
he was just in time to influence the "Director,"
and drag Chippendale (whose commercial side must
never be forgotten) into designing in a style for
which, it seems to me, he had but little real feeling.
I may be wrong, and, not professing to be an expert
in Gothic design, I sincerely hope I am.

It must, moreover, always be remembered that
the Gothic style has peculiar difficulties of its own.
It is apt, if too exact in its curves, to suggest a
mould. The ancient workmen relied more on hand
and eye than the moderns, who place their faith
in ruler and compasses. It is practically the same
difference as exists between wrought iron work and
cast iron. The apex of a mediæval arch would
almost certainly be slightly wrong; not enough to
appeal to one as such, but sufficiently so to avoid
mechanical exactness. It is very greatly this and
not only the colour or look of age which strikes us
dumb with admiration before an old cathedral,
while many of us are left more than half unconvinced
by even the best of the modern work.
It is only fair, then, to remember that of all possible methods for reproducing his designs Chippendale was compelled by circumstances into choosing the least responsive, and that it is unjust not to allow something for the uncompromising line of the graver. I have been unable to find a Gothic chair of any of his actual designs, but am indebted to Mr. Letts for permission to reproduce one of the period and style, which will sufficiently show my meaning.

Whatever blame is due to Chippendale’s Gothic from the point of view of design, there should certainly be some praise as well for its practical nature and the adaptation of each article to its intended use. His cabinets are not akin to sarcophagi, and his chair backs are not, as in a recent revival, uncomfortably suggestive of gravestones.
CHAPTER V.

CHIPPENDALE'S ENGRAVERS.

I have said that the "Director" can be taken as a guide to Chippendale's later period, and I use the word advisedly. It is not certain, either, that all Chippendale's work of the period is included in it, or that he actually produced even the greater part of the examples given. In fact, the probability is the opposite in both cases.

There can be very little doubt that he was perfectly honest in his declaration that his furniture was for all classes. He gives a sideboard, for instance, which is only slightly removed from a kitchen table; but in his chairs, though there are certainly six designs of plainish backs—some of them not too good—everything else is ornate, showing the latest French influence. If there was a demand for any particular articles of furniture it is the next thing to positively certain that Chippendale would have made them, and it is much more than merely probable that he turned them out in very considerable numbers.

The reason for many of his omissions is fairly evident. Chippendale is now, and probably was then, more famous as a chair-maker than anything else, so that a great number of his chairs would be
already sufficiently well known. The trade would not care to buy a book of drawings greatly composed of designs they knew, of which they possibly had specimens before the publication of the "Director," and Chippendale, the most versatile and energetic of all the workers of his time, was not likely to lay himself open to be sneered at for foisting old goods on the public. Then, again, we must remember that the book was a trade catalogue. Our present tradesmen do not spend large sums of money in advertising the older part of their stock, and though in some things the eighteenth century did not move quite so quickly as the twentieth, in the matter of furniture design the changes of fashion were even more rapid. If Sheraton is to be believed, Hepplewhite's book was already out of date five years after its production.

The "Director" itself shows an instance of even a quicker change of taste than this. The use of the human figure in design is conspicuous by its absence in the first two editions, but though the second was only published in 1759, as early as 1760 Chippendale was preparing several plates in which it was freely—indeed, too freely—used.

These plates are, many of them, so utterly unlike the spirit of the rest of his work that it is safe to say that, had there been no third edition, and some of the actual pieces had come down to us, his name would have been almost the last to have been guessed as their author. Indeed, after giving them careful study, I am very doubtful if he had much more to do with at least some of them than allowing his name to be engraved in the corner of the plate.
Chippendale could carve, therefore he could draw. But he had his limitations. In the first edition he gives a disquisition on, and even shows how to put a chair into, perspective; but his knowledge of it was merely theoretical. By placing his eye-line too high he got a "sudden" perspective which greatly interferes with the artistic effect.

It is nothing against Thomas Chippendale as a furniture maker that he did not understand pictorial effect, nor is it anything to be surprised at if he could not draw the figure. Art schools were not a salient feature of the early eighteenth century, and it is all the more honour to him, both as an artist and a man, that he succeeded as he did in spite of his disadvantages. That he could not draw the figure is evident from the difference between the results attained by the engravers. Darly was Chippendale's favourite engraver, and his other work is quite up to the mark, but when he attempts the figure the plates are bad, ludicrous, impossible, and, in fact, everything that Mr. Heaton has said about them, and a great deal more besides. I illustrate one as a specimen. The two boys are leaning up against actual trees engraved dark to make them realistic, from which trees hang bunches of grapes. On the supports which join the legs—the boys and the trees making the legs—a goat reposes on an inverted, dripping shell, while around it are placed bunches of grapes and other fruits. I have no hesitation in saying that Thomas Chippendale had nothing whatever to do with either the design or conception of this plate, and the same remark applies to several more about this date.
The use of assistants is as old as any serious art; but this, though it goes farther, is by no means an isolated instance of one man's work being passed off as another's. In literature we have Shakespeare and also Dumas; the elder Herring and his son in painting; S. W. Reynolds and Samuel Cousins in engraving; and, to come to more precisely similar instances, Adam and Pergolesi in design, and the employment of Angelica Kauffman, Cipriani, and others in painting furniture.

It depends on how well the styles are mixed whether detection is easy or the reverse. In this particular plate there is absolutely nothing to suggest Chippendale, but much to point to Darly. Even in his most flamboyant girandoles and mirrors, where one follows him least, there are certain points about Chippendale's designs which impress us. The masses and spaces are arranged with considerable artistic knowledge and taste, and the main structural lines are managed in such a way, that the design as a whole "fills the eye," and is understood at a glance. In this neither the masses nor spaces are pleasant, and the whole effect is confused in the extreme.

Another point about it, which would of itself throw doubt on its authorship, is that the figure of the youth to the right is almost exactly reproduced (by Darly again) in plate clxxxiv. Among the numerous faults attributed to Chippendale, paucity of imagination is not one, and to say that both plates are fac-similes of his drawings would be to contend for an isolated instance of repetition of one of the main objects.
The likelihood seems to be that there was a sudden call for this class of work, probably through the influence of Chambers and the Italian sculptors he brought to this country with him, and Chippendale, aware at least of some of his limitations, turned the work over to Darly, as being the engraver in whom he had most confidence. That he was far from being satisfied with the result is evidenced by the fact that, in the printing of this design, as also of the other on the same plate, instructions were evidently given to the printer to "wipe" the figures as much as possible, making the only instance of such treatment that I have been able to find in the "Director."

Just at this time, too, Chippendale employed the services of two new engravers, Clowes and Foster, who almost entirely devoted themselves to work where figures are introduced. Both of these were capable men, but it is not only their engagement that is suggestive, but the difference of motif in their work. In the plates engraved by Foster there is a certain amount of reserve, his work being very similar to Taylor's both in idea and execution, but in most of the plates by Clowes we find fancy running too rampant. If we admit that Chippendale was either influenced by his engravers, or allowed them in some instances a more or less free hand, this is precisely what we would expect to find, for Clowes was the engraver of Johnson's book, which is probably about the maddest piece of work ever produced by a presumably sane man. For the "Director" his work is toned down very considerably. There is nothing quite so ridiculous
as Johnson's realistic boy, who sits on the foot of a table, and fishes with a rod and line in a small bowl placed on the top of the underframing, but it is very greatly owing to him—or, in any case, the plates produced by him—that such unkind things have been said regarding Chippendale.

I illustrate what is perhaps the worst, where a cherub sits on the straining rail of a pier table, blowing a trumpet, while others sit or run about with flags and wreaths on the glass above. In this piece we also have marked differences from Chippendale's ordinary manner, with, unfortunately, a proportionate likeness to Johnson, as translated by Clowes. The leg of the table is of a style fashionable in the late thirties, and it was only used once in the first edition of the "Director," in a plate which was afterwards discarded. Johnson, however, was peculiarly fond of the shape, and it is probably to Chippendale's association with Clowes that we owe its resurrection.

In plate clxxx. of the third edition there are two designs of chimney-pieces engraved by Darly. The resemblance between them and those in Darly's own book is very striking, and has been mentioned by more than one writer. A careful comparison will show that the assertion that Darly designed both these pieces himself is justified.

The publication of the third edition so soon after the second was no mean task for any man who had other work to attend to at the same time. It is true that there are only fifty more plates in the third than in the first, and that several were added in the second, but a very great number of the old
CHIPPENDALE'S ENGRAVERS.
plates were thrown out. Many of the plates in all editions were undated, but, counting only such as are, there are no less than ninety-one new plates which were produced between 1760 and February, 1762. A plate in the "Director" does not mean necessarily a single design, for on many there are half a dozen or more, and though the first eight pages are taken up with architectural drawings, there are nearly four hundred objects illustrated. Nor is this all, if we are to count the possible variations suggested by showing different designs in the back, legs, front rail or arms. When the two sides of the back are of different patterns, and also the front legs, it is easy to see that we have two distinct designs, and two more possibilities in one object. But where, as in plate xix., we have two different chairs which may be either single or with any of four different arms, front rails which may be either plain or beaded, and four different legs which may or may not be connected with straining rails, it becomes evident that it is the work of a trained accountant to compute the suggested possibilities in the "Director." Chippendale, like a wise man, confines himself to saying that there is "a great variety."

The scope of the book is immense, as will be seen by his list: "Chairs, sofas, beds and couches, china tables, dressing tables, shaving tables, basin stands, and tea-kettle stands, frames for marble slabs, bureau dressing tables and commodes, writing tables and library tables, library bookcases, organ cases for private rooms or churches, desks and bookcases, dressing and writing tables with book-
cases, toilets, cabinets and clothes presses, china cases, china shelves and bookshelves, candle stands, terms for busts, stands for china jars and pedestals, cisterns for water, lanthorns and chandeliers, fire screens, brackets and clock cases, pier glasses and table frames, girandoles, chimney-pieces and picture frames, stove grates, borders, frets, Chinese railing, brass work for furniture, and other ornaments."

Of all these things there are only three (china tables, frets, and Chinese railing) for which there are not new designs in this edition, and the list, comprehensive as it is, does not include the beautifully designed bed-posts, the much improved sideboards, nor does it mention either breakfast tables or tea chests.

In the foregoing remarks I have not endeavoured to make out a case so much as to state the facts as they appeal to me. Nor are the arguments manufactured to suit a pre-conceived idea. For a long time it never occurred to me to doubt the authenticity of any part of the third edition, except the usually admitted mantel-pieces by Darly, and it was not until the great difference between the designs engraved by the older and the newly-added men struck me that I attempted to follow the discovery to what seems to me to be its logical conclusion.

It is natural that a man, himself connected with the art, should study the engravers as well as the engravings, but there is also the danger that he should magnify the results arrived at from merely technical knowledge. I have therefore endeavoured
to confine myself to what the ordinary reader can see for himself by merely glancing at the book.

To me it is clear that, in many instances—and these the designs which have met with the most adverse criticism—Chippendale exerted, at the most, merely a restraining influence.

There are many evidences of haste in the production of this edition, among which is the omission, already mentioned, of four classes of articles in the enumeration given on his title page. There is also the fact that he states the number of the plates wrong. There are really 210, not 200 plates. These ten additional plates seem to have been put in at the last moment, for the numbers engraved on them are the same as on the preceding or succeeding plate.

I have also seen a copy of the "Director" in which the plates are as in the third edition, with the exception of the ten plates mentioned above, but in which the old letterpress has been retained. It is evident, therefore, that the third edition was rushed through at such great speed that the probability of more being left in the hands of others is, on the face of it, very great.*

Some excellent designs were added, but a great number were cut out, seemingly at random. It is all the more amusing to be told by one's bibliomaniac friends that the third edition is worth, in money value, quite double of either of the other two.

* See pages 158-9.
CHAPTER VI.

ROBERT ADAM.

When we speak of the brothers Adam we only think of Robert, who was the second of the four brothers, for it was undoubtedly his influence which was predominant. Their father, William Adam, of Maryburgh, also an architect of distinction, was King's Mason in Edinburgh, and seems to have been entrusted with most of the important Scotch work of his time; Hopetoun House, the old Royal Infirmary at Edinburgh, and the restoration of Fort George (destroyed by Prince Charlie's troops), being well known examples. His work, which was done in the Scotch style of the period, shows great reserve, and undoubtedly influenced his sons, of whom John succeeded him as King's Mason in Edinburgh, while the other three settled in London.

Robert Adam was educated at Edinburgh University, where he began the long series of friendships with eminent men which continued through the rest of his life. His must have been a wonderful personality, for, even as a lad, he attracted men famous all over the world. David Hume, Dr. William Robertson, the historian, Adam Ferguson,
and Adam Smith, were among his Edinburgh intimacies. This power never left him, and when, in 1792, he was buried in Westminster Abbey, his pall-bearers were the Duke of Buccleuch, the Earl of Coventry, the Earl of Lauderdale, Viscount Stormont, Lord Frederick Campbell, and Mr. Pulteney.

With so many biographies launched on the world which nobody cares to read, it is a thousand pities that Robert Adam is not among the number so carefully dealt with. In his case in particular the man would be as interesting as his work. Such accounts as we have of him are meagre in the extreme, and at the same time very contradictory. No less than three dates are given for his departure for the continent, 1750, 1752, and 1754; while 1762 is almost universally stated as the year of his return. As Garton tells us, he formed "intimacies of the highest consequence, so that his attainment of eminence in his profession was peculiarly rapid." "Peculiarly rapid" it undoubtedly was, but this would have been little short of miraculous, as it was in the same year that he was appointed Architect to the King, and if it had been correct, it would have meant that the honour was done him before there had been time for any important design to become a brick and mortar fact.

From the point of view of furniture design the date of his return is important, as in Chippen-dale's third edition we find the ram's head with floral decoration underneath, which is such a favourite of Adam's, and one thing that can be almost postulated about Chippendale is that, whatever of himself he put into his work, the fundamental
idea came in the first place from someone else. This date is, however, fixed by Adam himself, who speaks of a piece of work having been "done since my return to England in 1758"; and, indeed, one of his finest designs, the Screen and Gateway for the Admiralty, was produced in 1760. This was probably entirely his own, as his brother James was

then in Italy, and did not return till 1762, hence, in all probability, the mistake in the date.

His choice of London as a place of residence and business marks an era in the history of Britain. For a very long time the union between England and Scotland was greatly a matter of parchments. There was no real feeling of unity, and neither nation understood, or cared to understand, the
character of the other. Till past the middle of the eighteenth century a Scotsman was more at home in Paris than in London. In the former he was an old ally, in the latter an alien.

Centralisation has its drawbacks even now; it had more then. The Scotch somewhat naturally resented the fact that so much of the rents of the poorer country should be spent in the richer, and the English, also somewhat naturally, had not the same welcome for the worker as for the noble or the man of property. Scotland was as little known as the Scotch. Such Englishmen as ventured across the border wrote of their travels and privations, especially the latter, much more emphatically than the present-day African explorer. The time had not come when the average man could appreciate the beauties of nature, and Scotland was described as a desert and her inns as the most comfortless things in creation. "No, sir," said Johnson to Boswell, "there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn." In a country where hospitality was a national habit there was but little use for such inns as abounded in England. The Scotch inns of the period seem to have deserved all that was said about them, but the publication of such books of "foreign" travel helped greatly to keep the two nations apart.

It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that the old Scotch alliance with France continued, though it was no longer offensive and defensive, or that everything, from her architecture to her cookery, that was not of purely native growth came from the
only real—or at least polite—friend that she had in the world. The laird drank French claret with his dinner and French brandy afterwards, and his lady looked on her Lyons silk and her Paris hat as a prescriptive right. In everything French ideas were predominant to the exclusion of English. The air needed clearing before the two nations could be one, and the thunderstorm which achieved or at least led to this desirable result was the rising of 1745. The page of history which begins with the landing at Moidart and ends with the Prince's escape reads more like a romance than a plain statement of fact. Supported only by a small part of a small nation, he won pitched battles with untrained troops and marched to within a hundred and thirty miles of the capital. It was a magnificent piece of madness, and it showed the Scotsman to the Englishman in a totally new light. He was not only a hard-headed driver of bargains, he was a man who could take his life in his hands and face certain defeat for a mere idea.

An Englishman is a sportsman; and the more trouble he has to get the better of anything, from a fox to a nation, the less his hate and the greater his respect. Then, too, even the atrocities perpetrated by Cumberland and others had in time a good effect. In Scotland they gave almost immediate unity to the two parties, at least as regards social life. Men who had borne arms against one another only a short time before met on terms of friendship, paying the most punctilious regard to each other's political opinions. To this day in Scotland the word "Pretender" scarcely exists.
In England the process was slower, but just as sure. In the scare, and after it, wild things were done; but when the excitement simmered down and there was no more actual danger, men began to ask themselves if ruthless barbarity was the best way of regaining peace and good fellowship.

When George III. ascended the throne his personal influence had also a good deal to do with establishing kindlier relations and sentiments. As is proved by his most unwise treatment of the American colonies, he could be just as obstinate as his predecessor, but he had no taste for atrocities, and, narrow in some things, he was yet broad-minded enough not only to condone but even to admire the loyalty of the Jacobites to the "king over the water." Several stories are told of him which exemplify these facts. On one occasion when, by his private police system, he was able to inform his minister that Charles Edward was actually in London, the minister immediately began to speak of warrants and the terrors of the law. "Leave me to deal with him myself," he said. "And what is your Majesty's purpose in such a case?" "Why," replied the kindly King, "to leave the young man to himself, and when he is tired he will go back again."

At another time he was told by the member for a Scotch county of a stout old Jacobite in his constituency who, when having the papers read to him, insisted on the words "King" and "Queen" being rendered as "K." and "Q." "Give him my compliments," said George; "that is," he smilingly added, "not the compliments of the King of
England, but those of the Elector of Hanover.” If George III. lost America, he at least gained the loyalty of Scotland, and did much to mitigate the bad effects of too strong racial feeling.

Another factor in this more real union was the change which had come about in the relations between Scotland and France. The Scotch Jacobites no longer looked on her as an ally, but as a country who, by fair promises, had sent so many brave men to death for no other purpose than her own private political intrigues; while the Whigs hated her because the moral support she had given had been the chief factor in the rising.

There was, therefore, an influx of Scotsmen into England. In art alone there are Sir William Chambers, Ramsay, the son of the poet (a much under-rated painter), Sir Robert Strange, and the Adam brothers. Chambers indeed had been brought up in England, but the others were Scotsmen of the Scots, and Strange had not only gone “out in the ’45,” but been a fugitive for his life.

Yet French influence, though waning, was by no means dead. For more than a century after Ramsay and Adam there is no trace of it to be found in Scottish art, but in their work it shows distinctly. Robert Adam’s style was classic, but much of it, like so many of the Latin words in our language, “came to us through the French,” and it was to France that young Adam intuitively turned when he left Scotland (probably in 1754), and not, as generally stated, to Rome. In that city he arrived in 1756, and there he is said to have studied under Clérisseau, a young French architect. His bio-
graphers have made so many palpable mistakes that I take leave to doubt this statement. That Adam formed an intimacy with him is certain, and that he was influenced by him is probable, but there is a great difference between studying under and studying with. Clérisseau, though only thirty-five at the time, was even then famous, and one of his pupils, Sir W. Chambers, was making a name in England. It is not altogether evident, therefore, how, a year later, he should have accompanied Adam to Spalatro in the subordinate position of assistant. Still, if any man had the capability of thus turning a master into a pupil through sheer force of character and magnetic presence, it must be admitted that that man was Robert Adam.

Adam chose the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro, in Venetian Dalmatia, as his first essay in architectural publication, because of its residential character; all other plans and drawings, which till then had been so treated, being of large public buildings.

He went to Venice with several assistants, among whom were Zucchi, the painter (whom he afterwards invited to England), and, as just mentioned, Clérisseau. Here he obtained leave from the Senate to sketch and make plans of the Palace, and immediately embarked for Dalmatia. The Venetian Senate, however, was formed of very different stuff from Robert Adam, who never allowed the grass to grow under his feet. They granted the permission with ready courtesy, but put off the trouble of notifying the Governor of Spalatro of the fact that they had done so to a
Door from the Temple of Esculapius at Spalatro.
more convenient season. The effect of this was that when Adam began operations the Governor, who could not understand why even an Englishman should be so mad as to go to such great trouble and expense merely to make careful plans of a lot of tumbled-down ruins, believed the fortifications to be his objective, and arrested him as a spy.

Most men, under the circumstances, would have been glad to have escaped with their lives. Not so Robert Adam. He had come to Spalatro for a specific purpose and he was not going to leave without attaining it. The Governor was adamant, so Adam added another to his growing list of friends in high places. This was General Graeme, the commander of the local Venetian forces, who so far prevailed upon the Governor as to obtain a grudging permission for the work to be continued, but under the supervision of an officer specially detailed to attend Adam constantly.

Adam had very little belief in the Governor, and none whatever in the Senate, so he hurried the work through in an almost unbelievably short space of time. There is no evidence of haste in the careful plans and accurate measurements any more than in the well-chosen points of view and the artistically composed drawings. Yet everything was done in five weeks.

For about another year Adam continued his travels, and then, returning to England, elected to settle in London. This choice was made more than ever possible by the facts already stated, but in his case it was almost a foregone conclusion. His brother John had inherited his father's practice in
Scotland, and Robert was not the man either to take a second place to anyone or start in opposition to his brother. Scotland was not only too small for both, it did not afford sufficient scope for his ambition. Even now a Scotch artist, if he decides to remain in Scotland, must lose not only in a pecuniary sense, but in name and fame. The English public have just awakened to the fact that Raeburn existed, and they have yet to learn that there are such names as Chalmers and Manson among the dead or MacTaggart and Wingate among the living.

If this is so at the present day, when the capitals are only separated by a few hours, what must it have been when it was possible for the mail bag from London to Edinburgh to contain only one letter?

The fault may or may not lie with the Academy, but it certainly is a fact that no great Scotch artist resident in Scotland has ever had consistently adequate treatment from that body, with the single exception of Raeburn, and he obtained it only through the great personal friendship and admiration of Sir Thomas Lawrence. It is, therefore, worthy of remark that when the Royal Academy was founded, though Robert Adam was at the head of his profession, he was simply tabooed by his brother artists, and Ramsay and Strange shared his fate. Fortunately the English art patron of the day was an educated critic, and paid no more attention to racial distinctions than to trade malice. It is comforting to know that the conduct of the scientific men of England was in sharp contrast to that of the Academy, for Adam was elected a Fellow both of the Royal Society and the Society.
of Antiquaries quite early in his career. Robert Adam's practice as an architect was immensely greater than that of Chambers (who, as a "naturalised" Englishman and a friend of Sir Joshua's, obtained not only admittance to the Academy, but special honour), and it continued to be so. Though Horace Walpole spoke disparagingly of the Adelphi Buildings, it was not to Chambers but to Adam that he went, even when what he wanted was something so far out of Adam's style and taste as Gothic design.

Nor did either Strange or Ramsay suffer for the slight. The former had honours accorded to him at Rome which had never been bestowed on any English artist, yet there is no reasonable doubt that the refusal to elect engravers as full members was aimed at Strange, a fact emphasised by the subsequent election of Bartolozzi; as in Adam's case, by the recognition of Zucchi and Clérisseau. But Strange, Jacobite as he was, was knighted by the King's own hand, with a laughing allusion to his Jacobite escapade, while Ramsay, for whom even Johnson forgot hatred of the Scots in the delight of his conversational powers, was made Court Painter, and lived in affluence, attracting everyone with whom he came in contact—except the Academy.

Robert Adam had, as has been already stated, the same gift, though, from the point of view of other artists, he may not have been altogether lovable. His belief in himself was so colossal as probably to approach conceit. The very fact that, as a young man of twenty-nine, who had already had a most
expensive education, he spent a considerable amount of his patrimony in a costly expedition, with the view of publishing a book which could not be ex-

ected to pay, is enough to show us something of the character of the man.

He had made up his mind that he was to take the world by storm, and he proceeded to do so with the
most absolute confidence, in spite of disadvantages of which he must have been, at least partially, aware.

In his day in Scotland, and, indeed; for long after, the speech of even the most educated was as a foreign language to English ears. Anything "Englishy" in accent was ridiculed. So much was this the case that when, towards the end of the century, certain Scottish advocates, who found their accent a serious drawback when arguing before the House of Lords, employed an "English master," the movement was laughed out of existence.

Adam may have been able to speak fairly fluently in both French and Italian; but if his ordinary mode of speech was, as it must have been, broad Fifeshire with a top-dressing of Midlothian, it could not have constituted the best introduction to London society. Yet from the first he was both a social and a professional success, and his immediate reception, despite his Scotch speech and his new gospel, says more for the immense power and personality of the man than any number of words. Other men, even greater than he, have had both reverses and doubts about themselves. Adam had neither. He was born to succeed, and he knew it. Even his book on the Palace at Spalatro, instead of being an expensive way of bringing him before the public, was a great commercial success.
CHAPTER VII.

ROBERT ADAM—HIS EARLY STYLE.

Though an artist in every sense of the word, Robert Adam was no mere dreamer of the studio. He was pre-eminently fitted for shining in the outside world both from a social point of view and as a man of affairs. So differently was his mind constructed from that of the ordinary artist that he resigned his position as Architect to the King, then the highest honour in his profession, to contest the seat for Kinross-shire. So great was his influence at the time that the post was immediately conferred on his brother James, to the exclusion of Chambers. This can scarcely be regarded as altogether fair. Chambers was a man of established reputation, and the acknowledged leader of the older school of architecture. Robert's appointment in 1762 cannot be held to be open to any grave objection, even from the most devoted partisan of the opposing school. He had been working alone for four years, for at that date James, his immediately younger brother, was still studying in Rome. In this time he had produced some of his finest work, including the screen and gateway of the Admiralty, and well
deserved the recognition given to him. James, on the other hand, for all that anyone outside the firm could tell in 1768, might not have had a single original idea in his whole composition. In any case, he was on a distinctly different plane from his brother, for the man who forms a style must necessarily take precedence of him who, however cleverly, adapts himself to it. So far one cannot help sympathising with Chambers, but all sympathy stops there. The same year saw that disgraceful hole-and-corner coup—the smuggling through of the charter of the Royal Academy. After this there was no official recognition of Robert Adam by the powers that were till his burial in Westminster Abbey.

However much one may admire the work of Chambers and Sir Joshua, their little-mindedness is an unfortunate blot on English art. They were the leading spirits in the association they had called into life, and both of them had the Royal ear—Sir Joshua from his position as official head of British art, and Chambers on account of his early connection with the King, to whom he had taught drawing. Of the two, Chambers is, perhaps, to be least despised. Sir Joshua certainly allowed Gainsborough to be elected a member, but he took care to make his connection with the body a perfect misery to a man of his great rival's delicately organised nature, heaping upon him every possible slight and polite insult he could think of, and, in all probability, he was also responsible for the fact that Gainsborough was never knighted.

Chambers was more open in his conduct. He
did not permit Adam's inclusion in the body in order to make a "cock-shy" of him; nor, indeed, was Robert Adam made of such sensitive and unoffending material as to render such a course advisable. But he neither damned him with faint praise, nor attempted to depreciate his success in architecture by unduly exalting his water-colour landscape. Wrong he had received, and wrong he gave back, taking care that the return should bear accumulated interest. It was inartistic, certainly; but it was human, and war to the knife is at least preferable to enmity disguised as friendship.

Robert Adam seems to have possessed one of those natures in which the strongly material side was as highly developed as the highly artistic. So far as his private life is concerned, one would never, except on the principle of "the nearer the kirk the farther from grace," have guessed at a descent from Calvinistic whig forbears, the only thing he had in common with them being indomitable energy and a thorough enjoyment of opposition strong enough to call all his powers into play.

What he probably meant to be the chief work of his life was the Adelphi Buildings, the business connection of the brothers being commemorated by the name chosen. It was also, on their part, a huge speculation, which possibly accounts for the fact of the very strong opposition it met with from various quarters. The City of London attempted to stop the work on the ground that the bed of the river (part of which was taken into the scheme) was their property. Public feeling, too, was strongly against
the scheme, and epigrams flew broadcast. One is worth quoting:—

"Four Scotchmen by the name of Adams,
Who keep their coaches and their madams,
Quoth John, in sullen mood, to Thomas,
Have stole the very river from us."

From the mention of "four" brothers it would appear to be probable that the oldest brother, if not a member of the firm, had at least something to do with this particular venture, the more so as the wit who produced the lines was so badly informed as to Anglicise the name to "Adams" (a mistake which still pertains) and would not have been likely to have heard of the Edinburgh architect had some such combination not existed. William, though connected with them in this venture, was not an architect, but a banker.

The opposition to his scheme exactly suited Robert Adam. He overcame it and built the Adelphi, but, from a commercial point of view, it was a complete failure. Again his power of resource was called into play and he succeeded in having a Bill passed through Parliament, authorising him to turn it into a lottery. This was accordingly done and the failure became a success.

He was less fortunate in combating the prejudices of his time with regard to his scheme for a Thames Embankment. It was no new thing, for Sir Christopher Wren had the same idea a century before, and actually prepared plans for carrying it into effect. But both in his time and that of the Adams it met with such strenuous opposition
Ceiling by Adam at the Savage Club.
that it had to be abandoned. It is impossible for us who know its advantages to understand where the difficulty lay, but, though there was nothing original in the conception, Adam deserves just as much praise for bringing it into public notice as if the foolish conservatism of his time had not prevented him from carrying it into effect.

The Adams, not being, like Lock and Chippendale, carvers, had no particular respect for the chisel. They used it, certainly, or rather caused it to be used, on some of their furniture, but by their introduction of a composition which could be cast and applied to wood, they practically killed carving. For this composition they held a patent, which they had to defend in the Law Courts. Except that their ceilings and panels were very fine indeed, we would be inclined to regret that the substance was ever discovered. It was, however, almost a necessity to their style, which, by their skilful use of it, was redeemed from what otherwise might have been coldness and severity. Chippendale and his contemporaries covered every possible article of furniture with carving, as naturally as one puts butter on bread, while the walls and ceilings, except for mirror frames and the like, were left plain. The Adams reversed this, and, to begin with at least, the furniture was inclined to a perhaps too studied simplicity, while the carving, or their imitation of it, spread itself over walls and ceiling. Yet so wonderfully was this done, and so strangely well did they combine the bold and sweeping with the light and graceful that we must go back to the Jacobean period to find its equal in unity of design.
Their use of stucco for the outside of houses has been much criticised. This may possibly be accounted for by the early training of the brothers. In the Scotland of their day there was no brick, while it had for long been the custom to protect stonework from the effects of weather by coating it with a rough preparation of lime. The Adams did much the same thing with stucco, except that stucco was in the nature of an imitation. Yet this is precisely why Adam used it. He had formed his style on stone, and, having to work in a country where brick was the material which, in most cases, had to be employed, he hit on this means of using it so as to suit his ends, while the idea would naturally occur to his mind from his acquaintance with Scotch "harling." It is scarcely to be regretted that he did not see the decorative possibilities of brick, for his whole style would have required as much alteration as the Highlander's musket. As it was, it must at least be admitted that the inside of his houses were in better unison with the outside than would have been the case if brick, pure and simple, had been the material.

Adam had no feeling for Gothic architecture, which is not altogether surprising when we remember what a clean sweep had been made of it in Scotland by the iconoclastic followers of Knox. The once fine cathedral of St. Andrews in his native county was even then the merest ruin, and though Melrose Abbey was much more entire than it is to-day, it is questionable if he saw it—certain that he did not study it. His father, who probably superintended his early training, had nothing in common
with it, and the whole opinion of the country was against the style. It was not until Scott had, by his writings, opened the eyes of his countrymen to its beauty that the Gothic was a possibility in Scotland. Nor was it till his death, and then, most appropriately, in the construction of his monument, that it was used for anything of importance.

The Adams had a full share of the prejudices of their country, and, in one of their numerous prefaces, they speak of Inigo Jones rescuing architecture "from the Gothicism of former times," as if it were a bad form of idolatry with anthropophagous rites. Again they say of it, "our ancestors, relinquishing the Gothic style, began to aim at an imitation of the Grecian manner until it attained that degree of perfection at which it has now arrived." The Adams, like the other writers of the period, were not given to hiding their light under a bushel, and they leave very little doubt in the mind of the reader as to who it was that brought the Grecian style to "perfection."

Just as their natural instincts as Scotsmen were opposed to the Gothic, the same early associations, and, in Robert's case at least, early study, inclined them to the French. Their style was classic, but it was not purely so, being nearly allied to French models, while here and there, as in the chair for Sir A. Hume, these are to be found with none of the classic veneer to hide them.

The brothers claim to have formed a style of their own, and the claim is generally admitted, though not quite to the extent stated by them. "We have not," they say, "trod in the paths of others nor
Armchair designed for Sir A. Hume. From the original drawing.
derived aid from their labours. In the works which we have had the honour to execute, we have not only met with the approbation of our employers, but even with the imitation of other artists, to such a degree as, in some measure, to have brought about in this country a kind of revolution in the whole system of this useful and elegant art."

There can be no doubt whatever as to the fact of the revolution in style they brought about, and that in furniture as well as architecture. In furniture the designs were becoming more and more infected with the flamboyant, a style which, in England at least, could not be very long-lived.

Though it was, to a certain extent, suited to the height of the most extravagant of the London fashion, it was not appreciated by the ordinary Englishman of the day who, like Mr. Monday, was a "plain roast and boiled man," and could not, and, indeed, did not, take kindly to French kickshaws. This accounts for the fact that, in spite of the numerous designs by different men, comparatively few of the actual articles are extant, all the more so as the fashion was very short-lived. It became rampant about the time Adam took up his abode in London, and though it existed and even flourished for a few years, it had no chance with the nation when put into competition with the reserve and dignity of Adam.

I have more than once been compelled to allude to the carelessness with which this period of English design has been treated. I question if there is any subject on which so much has been written where it is so difficult to account for mistakes, ranging
from mere inaccuracies to gross blunders. Broad statements are made which have not even the narrowest basis of fact to account for them, dates have been seemingly quoted from memory—and bad memories—and there is a perfectly bewildering mass of misconception and error out of which it is extremely difficult to arrive at the truth. When, several years ago, I first seriously took up the study of the subject, I was advised by a well-known writer on it never to believe either a fact or a date which I had not proved for myself, and I never received better advice. The mistakes are, to a great extent, forgivable, seeing that the South Kensington catalogue, which ought to be absolutely trustworthy, is the least reliable of all. Mr. Litchfield, for instance, pointed out several years ago that the date of Chippendale’s “Director” was given in it as 1769, instead of 1754, and this is by no means the worst of its many errors.

No man in writing of a long forgotten past of which the records are peculiarly scanty can hope for absolute accuracy, which, after all, is a thing that only appeals to the expert, whose own knowledge should be sufficient to counteract the bad effects of its absence. The “man in the street” does not care in the least whether a date is wrong by fifteen years or not, but he does expect of a critic that he should sum up for him the facts of the subject on which he writes as carefully as a judge should weigh and balance evidence. It is impossible that in art matters there should be unanimity of opinion, and it would be a bad day for art should such a thing ever happen. From the
nature of the subject it is essential that there should be diversity of taste, or progress would stop.

When, therefore, Robert Adam is spoken of as the greatest of the eighteenth century furniture designers, I have no quarrel with the statement as an honest expression of opinion, but I utterly and absolutely object to the mangled facts and the suppressions, whether wilful or ignorant, of the truth which are used to support the contention.

Chippendale's beds, for instance, are spoken of as "miracles of false and foolish taste," but the fact that the Adams designed beds almost exactly similar, and, moreover, evidently inspired by Chippendale, is carefully suppressed. The bed constructed "for their Majesties," of which there is a drawing in the Soane collection, resembles some of those in the "Director," even to the cherubs disporting themselves on the dome. It does not appear to me, however, to be so happy, as the bed posts, from their severer treatment, do not lend themselves to the fanciful dome and figures.

This is no single instance of the Adams designing in the manner. Among other drawings are two sofas, dated 1762, in which the female figure has been used for the arms, and an armchair (1776), where griffins couchant have been employed for a similar purpose. The worst of all is perhaps the figures of satyrs which support the beautiful harpsichord made for the Empress of Russia. The body of this is most charmingly decorated with typical designs, but the legs, in the worst taste of the time, spoil the effect. Even Johnson, mad as he was, sometimes used his ornament appropriately, but
Design of Harpsichord for the Empress of Russia. From the original sketch.
in the present case, even if their introduction appealed to one as artistic, there could not well have been a worse choice for a lady's boudoir than satyrs.

In the same way Chippendale is said to be venal in the extreme because he made whatever his customers desired. I fear that the only excuse for pot-boiling is its universality, and Robert Adam was not one of the few artistic exceptions which prove the rule. As a matter of fact he did what was even worse. Chippendale found fault with no style, and even if we take the lowest view of this and do not call it catholicity but the tradesman's instinct of leaving himself free to produce what he pleases, it is surely preferable to the conduct of Adam in similar circumstances. It suited him to run down the Gothic, yet he designed in it, not once but many times, when commissions for it came in his way.

It is certainly, to say the least, no great compliment to Adam that it should have been considered necessary by one of his greatest admirers to attempt to add to his reputation by dwelling unduly on the faults of others or suppressing all mention of his own. Fortunately, however, Robert Adam was a man of such eminent ability that his position in art could not be affected by the mistaken partiality of even his most unwise admirers.
CHAPTER VIII.

ROBERT ADAM—EARLY FURNITURE AND SIDEBOARDS.

Robert Adam as a furniture designer is so distinctive, and also so different from what immediately preceded him, that one is inclined to class his furniture with his architecture in the suddenness of its departure from existing ideals. In the latter he took the country by storm, from the novelty as well as the excellence of his style, but in the first few years after his return to England, in 1758, this is true to a much more limited extent of his furniture. That this should have practically escaped notice is probably due to the fact that he and his brother James only began to publish their designs fifteen years after Robert settled in London.

Even in the interior fittings of his early period, especially in his carved woodwork, there is much to remind us of Chippendale and Lock, with here and there even a reminiscence of Johnson, while in his furniture he was naturally more affected by the reigning influences.

It is stated by several writers on the Adams that Robert was responsible for the furniture designs. There may be some absolute authority for thus
crediting the older brother with the movables, or it may be merely tradition. In the latter case I would point out that tradition, even as regards such well-known workers of the eighteenth century as the Adams, is very poor evidence. The youngest brother, William, is stated by some of their biographers to have been a member of the firm, and to have designed the houses on the north-west side of Whitehall Place, while by others he is said to have been by profession a banker, and to have had nothing to do with the firm further than editing their posthumous works. There may, of course, be truth in both accounts, but that his personality was not a factor in the work of the firm is evident, for, had he possessed a small part of his brothers’ genius, he would scarcely have sacrificed the best business of the kind in England at their deaths. It is, therefore, of very little consequence whether he was an architect or not, and the discrepancy between the accounts is only worthy of mention as showing how difficult it is to rely on the little information we have.

It would be a comparatively easy matter to make out a good case for the influence of James on furniture. There is not, so far as I am aware, any direct statement as to when he joined his brother, but in 1762 he was still studying in Rome, and 1762 is a marked year in Robert Adam’s furniture designs. Up to and including that date many of them might, without betraying ignorance on the subject, be taken for Chippendale’s or Mayhew’s, while after it the similarity becomes greatly and rapidly less.
With any other man than Robert Adam this would almost amount to proof positive, but he had such a facility in adapting himself to others, as well as the greater faculty of merging their work into his own dominant personality, that, in his case, it is impossible to dogmatise.

On the other hand, we must bear in mind the fact, evident from the earlier drawings, that he had, during his travels, paid but little attention to furniture, and confined himself almost entirely to the study of architecture pure and simple. This was only natural, for the buildings he went abroad to study were extant while the furniture had long since disappeared, and he had no models to follow even had he so desired. On his arrival in England his recognition as the first of his profession was so instantaneous that, with all his belief in himself and his fortunes, he could not possibly have been prepared for the amount of work which crowded in on him, which he must have had to undertake practically single-handed, and, furniture being a secondary consideration, his early designs for it are few in number. Thus it came that though, when beginning his professional career, he was content to use what was easily procurable, with an increasing army of assistants he had more time to devote to personal superintendence of detail, and the longer he lived the more attention he paid to it. He seems to have considered that there was nothing too small to give his mind to, and, besides furniture proper, carpets, etc., he designed needlework, counterpanes, and even workbags.

This capability of extreme attention to detail is
one of Robert Adam's most marked characteristics, and the evolution of his particular style in furniture design may well have been due to the increasing time at his disposal rather than to any outside influence.

It was his thoroughness rather than his knowledge of, or love for, furniture as furniture that led him into designing it. Having no practical training, he left the different objects very much as he found them as regards mere structure. There is no surprisingly new departure, as in the shield back chairs of the Hepplewhite school, which could not have suggested themselves to an amateur in the actual work, however much of a designer; for to see how to make them, and, more difficult still, to know that they would be strong enough when made for all practical purposes, required an acquaintance with carpentry and a knowledge of the grain of wood which he could not have possessed.

He had tried the existing models and found them, for his purposes, wanting. They clashed with his style; so he began slightly to alter either English or French ideas to suit his walls and panels. His sideboards are typical of his manner of accomplishing this. They were precisely what Chippendale was making, as far as structure or accommodation was concerned, yet distinctively his own in line and treatment. At each end of these he afterwards placed a pedestal surmounted by an urn, and, later still, a movable cellaret beneath. This combination of different articles he calls a "sideboard," as distinct from a sideboard table, though they continued as separate pieces for many years.
Doorway. From an original sketch in the Soane Museum.
afterwards. One pedestal contained a cupboard for hot plates, and the other a similar convenience for wine. In the former of these there was a stand for holding a heater similar to those employed in the old-fashioned tea urns, and the shelves were composed of wooden bars forming racks on which the plates were placed edgewise. The urns held metal cisterns, the one being intended to contain iced water for table use; the other, hot water for washing the spoons and forks. Silver was silver in those days, and nobody considered it necessary to have a sufficient stock to suffice for every course of a dinner, nor even to make the pretence that they had by sending them out of the room to be washed.

Adam’s clients were among the very rich, so that he had chiefly to consider large rooms which were better filled up than left empty; and it must be admitted that the pieces kept apart in this way give a look of greater dignity than when, as happened considerably later, they were crushed into one article.

To the sideboard table as well as to the sideboard, there was added a brass rail for supporting silver and candle brackets, otherwise, as far as convenience goes, it was left untouched by Adam. Sheraton, who designed both pieces of furniture, sometimes made the sideboard table with so many drawers and shelves that there was little difference between it and the sideboard, except for the absence of pedestals.

The old-fashioned houses contained so many large, roomy cupboards that there was not the same
State Sideboard for the Dining-room at Kenwood.
necessity for storage room as existed later. As the cupboards disappeared, the sideboard received additions to compensate for their loss, while the garde de vin, or cellaret, which began by being placed below as a separate article, was joined to the structure.

Though Adam introduced so many of the articles which at length made the sideboard proper, it does not seem at all likely that the idea of combining them into one piece emanated from him. Adam, however, actually designed one of these for Messrs. Gillows, of a copy of which I give a reproduction. The original, of course, had urns surmounting the pedestals, which have been left out in this as not being suited to modern requirements. A sideboard of almost precisely the same design is given by Mr. Litchfield in his "Illustrated History of English Furniture," the chief difference being that the legs are round, and more typical of Sheraton than Adam, making it more than merely likely that Adam's designs, like so many more of the time, were used by other furniture makers for some time after his death with but little change. The extra convenience of this piece and the reduced size are less suggestive of the ducal mansion than the home of the ordinary citizen, and this, coupled with the fact that Adam was specially requested to design it, makes it excessively likely that both the combination and the additions were primarily the idea of some other man.

The sideboard table, nevertheless, remained in fashion, Hepplewhite and Gillows both using it in 1787 and later, while Sheraton, who brought the
sideboard to its highest in convenience, was still designing them in 1802.

During the sixties both these pieces of furniture were produced in plain mahogany with carved decorations, for it is not till after 1770 that we find Adam using inlay or colour in his furniture. Gilding was employed, but that had been common before. This is all the more extraordinary because of his fondness for colour in other particulars. From the beginning of his career he used it lavishly on ceilings, panels, etc., but it did not seem to strike him for the first twelve years or more to vary a piece of furniture in a similar manner. As soon as this did so occur to him, from whatever source the idea came, he saw at once how well it was fitted to combine with the rest of his interior fittings, and his use of it is one of the chief charms of his later as compared with his early work.

Adam does not shine particularly as a chair designer. It is not that they are bad, but that other men succeeded so much better, while in some other articles of furniture, such as sideboards and commodes, his own work is much more convincing. Yet even in his chairs two things are worthy of notice. He seems to have been the first to have helped on the revolution to lightness in their construction, and also he appears to have been the first to use the "shield back" shape. In the sketches preserved at the Soane Museum there are two of these which, in general outline, are almost precisely similar to Hepplewhite's, except that Adam's, being hall chairs, are solid representations of a shield, while the Hepplewhite school, though
Lyre-back Chair in the style of Adam (Victoria and Albert Museum),
keeping to the outside line, and also the manner of its joining the seat, filled the interior in the distinctive and graceful way with which we are familiar.

Adam had no workshop of his own for the production of the furniture he designed. To begin with, he probably left the choice of furniture to his clients, while later he employed the existing firms to construct it from his drawings. Chippendale is said to have worked for him, and this is more than likely. Considering the likeness that some of the earlier carved work bears to the style of the great cabinet-maker one might be forgiven for supposing something more than mere influence.
CHAPTER IX.

ROBERT ADAM—THE EFFECT OF THE BROTHERS' DESIGN ON ENGLISH FURNITURE.

Of all the furniture designers of the eighteenth century, the two men most given to taking whatever they wished to appropriate were Thomas Chippendale and Robert Adam. The first of these has been called a thief, while the originality of the other has been lauded to the skies.

I think it is only fair to the memory of the old carver, as well as to the real advantage of the architect’s great name, to examine the evidence in our possession as to their modes of adaptation.

When an artist, as is usually the case, permits himself to be imbued with the feeling of any particular school, his doing so is perfectly permissible, and the strongest word which ought to be employed regarding his action is “Influence.” If, on the other hand, it is not a school but a man he follows, and if not only that man’s mannerisms and individualities appear in his work, but parts of it are more or less reproduced, it is mildly described in the artistic slang of the day as “Cribbing.” As far as my reading goes there are only two individual men from whom Chippendale has ever been accused of taking
anything. Most of his critics have given Chambers the credit (or discredit) of influencing his work in the "Chinese manner." As I have already pointed out, this is impossible as a mere matter of dates, and, in any case, without stopping to consider the relative artistic excellence, the results arrived at were as opposite as the poles. They certainly had the same origin, but they had no resemblance to one another.

In our own day we have two schools of painting whose centres are Glasgow and Cornwall. In each case the primary influence was French, but as we know them now, it would be difficult to mention two methods more entirely different; and anyone who cares to look into the matter can see that the Chinese of Chambers and the Anglo-Chinese of Chippendale are every whit as far apart.

For pointing out the influence of Johnson on Chippendale's later work I am myself responsible. I regret the influence as much as anyone, but simply because it was of a bad and demoralising kind, which brought on his head some severe and well-merited criticism. But Chippendale, even in this style, was not only immensely superior to Johnson, but so different that there can be no confusion between them.

It is impossible to contend for this as regards some of the work of Robert Adam. It may be blindness, but it is at least not wilful blindness which makes me unable to discriminate, in the case of some of his early chairs and sofas, between Adam and Mayhew, or between some of his early chimney pieces and those by Chambers.
It seems to me that, in the interests of Adam's reputation, it is unwise to ignore this, and far better to admit it frankly and point out the excuses.

Most artists have done early work, some of which they would, if they could, consign to the flames. That Adam actually did so, as far as the designs are concerned, is made more than merely likely by the paucity of the early drawings which have been preserved, and, in some ways, it is almost a pity that he stayed his hand where he did, except that the history of his design is immensely more complete than that of any of the furniture makers of his time. If we had as full a record of any of the other men it is at least open to doubt if they would bear such close scrutiny.

It must also be remembered that Adam, as a comparatively young man, with great theoretical but no practical knowledge of his profession, was suddenly pitchforked into the premier position in British architecture, and an architect's business includes many things besides sitting at a desk and making drawings. From almost the first moment he set foot again on English soil he was one of the busiest men in the nation, and was here, there, and everywhere. The wonder is not that we find the work of his contemporaries mirrored in his, but that so little of it is apparent.

Adam's indebtedness to the English workers of his time was small, but with regard to Italian influence and to the designs of one particular man of that school it is not so easily discounted. Part of his "stock-in-trade" which has been preserved along with other drawings in the Soane Museum is a
volume of original designs by an Italian architect named Giuseppe Manochi. There can be little doubt that Adam made considerable use of these, for they show plainly in much of his early work and even as late as 1768 there are drawings which are only too evidently the outcome of a study of this very book, while it is also fairly obvious that a great part of his style in decoration is founded on Manochi.

These remarks by no means apply to the whole of Adam's early work, much of which was as distinctive as the whole of it afterwards became, so that it is only fair to look upon the too literal copies as exceptions which owe their existence to the haste of a young architect with an insufficient staff attempting the impossible in rate of production. As the years went on we find his work becoming more and more distinctive, till at last his style in decoration attains a simplicity combined with grandeur utterly undreamt of by the man on whose work it was founded. It is curious to note that as he simplified his decoration, he made his furniture more ornate, until, after 1770, the two styles he began by working in met and became really homogeneous. That this resulting style has an indisputable claim to originality in the best sense of the word is scarcely open to argument, but it is well to remember how he arrived at it, for, if nothing else, it was part of the history of the man.

Nor was it only Italian art which influenced Adam. Some of his chairs, and much of his other furniture, are of direct French origin. It would be surprising, if we were not prepared for it, that no
one should have considered it worth while calling attention to the fact in capital letters, but Adam could take the horse out of the field without anyone disputing his right of possession, while Thomas Chippendale represents the other man mentioned in the proverb.

There can be no doubt that the decoration of furniture with painting and plaques was taken from France, and Adam was certainly among the first to adopt the new method. France was then the country on which the eyes of the civilised world were focussed, and she continued to be so for more than half a century. Nor was it only in art that England felt the influence. The French monarchy was hastening to its end, if not in a blaze of glory, at least in a magnificent display of fireworks, and it is difficult for contemporaries to diagnose correctly the symptoms of decadence. There were people then, as there always have been and always will be, who cried "wolf," but it is doubtful how much they believed in their own warnings. England as a whole certainly did not see the rotten state of her neighbour, for never before had French influence been so paramount, affecting nearly everything, from manners and customs to furniture. Our strong native school of painting kept that art free, or nearly so, from Gallic influence, for there was no French painter to compare with several of our best, but this was probably the one exception.

Whether or not Robert Adam was the first to re-introduce French influence into English furniture matters little even to those who would have preferred more native ideas, for the fashion would have
come in any case, and, had it been without Adam's restraining hand, it is almost certain that it would have been carried to much greater lengths.

The last flood of French influence had come about twelve years before, and it drew even Thomas Chippendale into its vortex. From this Adam had, practically single-handed, saved the country. The flamboyant lingered on spasmodically through the sixties, but it was moribund, and Lock, its chief remaining preacher, was one of Adam's closest followers. If half a dozen of his designs for "table frames" were mixed up with the same number by Adam it would be almost impossible, without previous knowledge of the actual drawings, to rearrange them correctly. Lock's designs are just as good as those by Adam, but then they are Adam pure and simple, without any evidence of having filtered through another artistic consciousness.

The Adam brothers justly claimed not only to have formed a style but to have created a school of architecture, and, fortunately for English furniture, the same is equally true regarding everything they touched. They held a position in eighteenth century furniture design unparalleled till the advent of Sheraton, for Chippendale and probably Hepplewhite seem to have followed almost as much as they led, while, after the first few years, the Adams owe little to what was going on around them except as regards construction. In furniture, at least, that was Robert Adam's weak point, and there is no perceptible difference after James became his partner. When he adopted the French methods, Adam used them pretty much as he had Chippen-
dale's. There is nothing strikingly new in construction; there are examples which can scarcely be told from the originals; but in the vast majority there is a retention of power and an individuality quite as striking as in any of his other work. The commode illustrated is an admirable example of his treatment in this respect. It is simple and delicate but has none of the trifling effeminacy which too close a copy could scarcely have been without.

I do not emphasise this indebtedness to the French from any wish to minimise Adam's originality. On the contrary, I consider that his sane and healthy use of a frivolous and decadent period of design is one of the chief points to be admired in his work. I dwell so much upon it because it has, I think unwisely, been carefully left in the background. I have always utterly failed to understand the position of the admirers of any man's work, in whatever line, who claim for it absolute originality. In anything which has to do with mechanics, from an up-to-date battleship to a bicycle, there may be many new points, but whatever approaches perfection is the result of slow evolution through hundreds or thousands of thinking minds.

This is so to quite as great, possibly even a greater, extent in art. Admitting that an artist could evolve a style which borrowed nothing from others, it could not be anything more than a foundation for successors to work upon, and would bear no greater resemblance, either in form or merit, to the ultimate result, when it had passed through
Commode for Apsley House. From the original drawing.
multitudes of hands, than the trireme to the battle-
ship, or the Dandy propeller to the motor bicycle. To contend for this mistaken view of originality, even by a *suppressio veri*, is anything but com-
plimentary to an artist, more especially so if, like Robert Adam, his skill in combination was so great that he not only stamped the impress of his mind in his own works, but of that of a whole period.

To deny or ignore this French influence is not only to the disadvantage of Adam's name as an artist, it makes the study of the history of evolution in English furniture unnecessarily difficult, if not impossible of comprehension; while, taking it into consideration, we not only see the hand of Adam in Sheraton's return to severity, but in the delicate ornateness of the Hepplewhite period.

It is nearly impossible to over-estimate the effect of Robert Adam's mark in English design, though in some cases it is more direct than in others. The wonder is not that, in chairs, for instance, we can only see Adam as an influence, but that we can trace him at all. Each piece of his furniture was separately designed for its appointed place, and could never be seen in a showroom, while the book published by the brothers was too expensive to be purchased by ordinary cabinet-makers. Yet, where they went their own way, or even seem to have made a new road, it was Adam who planned out the line of country.

In his early works, as we have seen, Robert Adam was largely indebted not only to Chippendale models but to Chippendale's actual style. After the first five years came the period of purer works and
severer lines by which, though unrepresented in the published designs, he is most generally known. This phase only lasted for some five or six years, and, as Adam designed most of his furniture in the succeeding period, examples of it are excessively rare and much sought after. Many of my readers will remember the magnificent sideboard and vases recently sold for an immense sum at Christie's, and which, though described in the catalogue as "Chippendale" were perfect examples of Adam's work at this time.

Though the decoration of furniture by painting seems only to have become fashionable in 1771, this does not mean that a piece so decorated may not have a prior date. In 1762 Chippendale published a design for a commode which showed stronger French influence than usual, the panels of which were intended for painting, and Robert Adam (or possibly his brother) designed an organ case for the Earl of Bute in the following year, in which there is a medallion with painted figures. It is possible, on the one hand, that many more such pieces were made, and on the other that even these were not executed. It is very questionable if many of the new designs in the third edition of the "Director" ever took shape except on paper, and the organ case is one of two designs for the same piece preserved in the Soane Museum.

Adam seems to have spared no trouble to please his clients. For many articles there are even more drawings than this. Two designs for the Empress of Russia's harpsichord are included in the collection, and yet it was actually made from a
third. Nor was it only as a young man or regarding some very special piece that he took such evident pains, there are, for instance, three designs of "turines" for Sir Watkin Wynn, and as many of the same article for the Duke of Northumberland.

The organ case just mentioned is of special interest to those who, like myself, attempt the difficult task of dating eighteenth century furniture. Adam had already used coloured medallions containing figures for the ornamentation of walls and ceilings, yet this is the one drawing I have been able to find where it was applied to furniture in the sixties. It is also remarkable that, when the brothers did so apply it, this is the first form it took.

It would seem to be at least possible that James is responsible for the innovation, as this is the year of his return from Rome, and had the idea occurred to Robert himself it is not at all likely that he would have waited eight years before using it again.

James does not seem to have been made a member of the firm on his arrival in England. In 1764 the brothers are alluded to as Messrs. Robert & James Adam, but in 1765 drawings are still signed "R. Adam, Architect," after that the signature is "Adelphi," a trade name probably chosen to show classical education as well as tastes, and which they used some years afterwards for their great speculation in the Strand.

So far as I am capable of judging, there is not such a change from the date of James's return in architecture as in furniture, and there is certainly no sudden breaking away in mural decoration. The
tradition is almost universal, as mentioned before, that Robert designed all the furniture, but if that is so there are two facts left unexplained, the small number of the furniture drawings before 1763 and their change in character after that date. Whether Robert first of all absorbed James's style and proceeded more quickly in the line of evolution to which he was tending, or whether Robert himself was changing and dragged James after him, are things we can now only speculate on, and that not to any great advantage, for the designs, though so different in motif, are still sufficiently similar in style to have been all of them the work of one artist in varying moods.

When Adam arrived at the conclusion that it was necessary to make his furniture harmonise with his decoration, he was as thorough in this as in everything else. It had always been his custom to design a piece not only for a particular house, but for a particular room, and he now carried this practice still farther by not only seeing that the colour but the design of the decoration was in keeping with the rest.

The upholstery of his early chairs and sofas was left plain, showing that it was either intended to be so, or that the choice of covering was left to the taste of the client, but from 1771 onwards the designs of the textile fabrics are as carefully considered as the structure of the piece, and are frequently, as in the "Confidente" illustrated, even more typical of the man.

There are several minor facts regarding details of design which are made very clear both by Adam's
Original sketch for a Table-top in the Soane Museum (1775).

[Facing p. 127.]
published books and the drawings at the Soane Museum. One of these is his re-introduction of the lion's paw into furniture. The claw and ball, which had died out before his time, he never used, but the paw, which, but for a few isolated instances, had been relinquished in the fifties, he not only resuscitated, but made it one of his favourite forms. His use of it can scarcely be commended, for over and over again the leg of a table or a tripod has a ram's head at the top and a lion's paw at its base, suggesting rather curious views on natural history.

Adam seems to have been the first to employ the honeysuckle pattern in this country, and his use of it is curiously like what we have already noticed in his painted medallions. From the first it appeared on his walls, but it is not till 1774 that we find it applied to a commode, nor till 1778 to a chair. Even then it is not what it became in the next decade, when it was used as an alternative for the Prince of Wales's feather. The chair he decorated with this design is a hall chair, and therefore the back is solid, the honeysuckle taking up the great part of the space.

Adam's use of what is generally known as "Fan" inlay on a slab-table, designed in 1775, is also probably the earliest of its kind. This design was also an old friend of Adam's, but it had nothing to do with a fan. It is simply one half of one of his favourite central ornaments for a ceiling, and what looks, in its divided state, like the sections of a fan with pointed corners, was, to begin with, an attempt to represent suspended drapery tacked up at regular
intervals. The table itself is gilt, just as it would have been ten years before, but here medallions are let in to give colour. The figures of Sphinxes, with realistically dressed hair, are also very typical forms of Adam decoration, and were largely employed by other designers of the time.

It is a pity that Adam designed so few chairs; but chairs have constructive difficulties of a kind which he, probably knowing his weakness, seems to have avoided; yet if we look at his work in furniture as a whole, it is impossible not to admit the wideness of his scope and the correctness of his eye. Bad drawings there are, but they form the exceptions, and if he was not the greatest of the eighteenth century furniture designers, which is at least open to argument, there can be no doubt whatever that he was the most consistent.
CHAPTER X.
MINOR FURNITURE MAKERS.

In writing of the furniture designers of the eighteenth century other than Chippendale, Adam, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton, I use the phrase "minor men" for convenience, and by no means vouch for its correctness, even though they cannot, like the "minor poet certified by T——l," cavil at the suggested inferiority. The minor man of to-day may easily step into the front rank of to-morrow. In quite recent times such names as Hals and Raeburn were relegated to this class, while David Lucas, who would have sold his plates of The Lock or The Cornfield for the present value of single proofs, is no longer considered "hopelessly behind Cousins, and is usually placed, by the writer for one, a long way in front of him.

I have no wish to exalt these men unduly, but it is evident to me that much too little attention has been paid to their work. In no art with which I am acquainted, or any period of that art, are the minor men so near the great, or so wanting in recognition. This is partly due to the fact that there are no cheap editions of their works, so that the ordinary amateur who cannot afford to possess the originals, and has no time to study them in such
libraries as they can be found, knows very little concerning them.

Not so very long ago "Chippendale" and "eighteenth century" were almost synonymous terms, and it was news to most people that Robert Adam designed furniture. Indeed, I remember one London dealer telling me that he had never seen such a piece. Now most people at all interested in the matter can easily distinguish between Chippendale, Adam, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton, but it is a regrettable fact that most of the knowledge stops there, for there are other men who approach them very closely and occasionally even surpass them. We have moved a stage further in the knowledge of the period. We have four names instead of one, but these names are still as generic as Chippendale's used to be, and whatever approaches to the style of any of them is too apt to be unhesitatingly put down to his credit or discredit, as the case may be.

Despite the fact that three new names have been brought into notice, and that very severe criticisms have been passed on his work, Chippendale still holds his place in the public estimation. Doing justice to the greatest of his successors has in no way damaged his reputation, even though he is not always accorded a first place; so neither will a study of the men still considered minor affect our appreciation of those already known.

In an art which is dependent on fashion to perhaps too great a degree, and which is so intimately connected with architecture as to be really a part of it, a style or design, however good, may
very quickly become antiquated; and, on the other hand, however bad, may as speedily become the fashion. "Last season's goods" may not have been quite so much looked down upon in the eighteenth century as now, but there was certainly a striving after novelty, and it was not always the great man who began what the others carried on. On some instances of this one can put one's finger, as there are dates and published designs which it is impossible to get away from, while in others the introduction of an innovation is a matter of reasonable doubt as regards authorship. In any case it is quite certain that much of the furniture, and even of the fine examples, ascribed to any one of the four great names, is the design and workmanship of practically forgotten men.

I quite offended a friend the other day by telling him what a fine example a certain piece was of Mayhew. It was useless to point out that the article was not only no worse for being called by its proper name, but that it made it even more interesting, fine examples of Chippendale being comparatively common, while few have, or at least know they have, a genuine Mayhew.

In some few instances Chippendale's receipts have been preserved, but I have never heard of such a thing in the case of furniture made by other men of or before the time of the "Director." This makes the study of the subject very much more difficult, for except in the case of the Gillows, we have only the published books to guide us, and in all of them till Adam's time the illustrations are so inferior to Chippendale's that we are not only disposed to
underrate the work, but to find a difficulty in recognising it when we meet with an actual example.

A chair or a table is a very different thing from a painting on which to give an opinion as regards authorship. Painting somewhat resembles handwriting in its merely mechanical part. The thing expressed is, or ought to be, of so much more importance than the turn of a pen or the trick of the brush that individualities and mannerisms are numerous, and a careful study of them leads, in spite of wonderful imitations, to practically certain results. In most furniture there is no such guide. The master craftsmen of the eighteenth century certainly produced with their own hands, but there was no attempt at individuality of work or touch, nor could Chippendale or Hepplewhite have done more than generally supervise by far the greater part of the articles they sold, while a man with a smaller staff would rely more on himself.

This is an added difficulty, and one of considerable magnitude. It is too ordinary a mistake to suppose that any piece of furniture resembling the style of one of the best known exponents is actually by him if it is peculiarly well executed. On the other hand, a piece evidently inspired by Manwaring or Ince is more likely to be authentic, as their work, not being so much valued in their own time, would not be so widely copied.

Skilled carvers existed in considerable numbers in the eighteenth century, and seem to have been easily procurable; but, as was natural at a time when small businesses flourished instead of huge
company-promoted concerns, many of the best of them started shops of their own and made the difficulty still greater by adopting or very slightly altering the designs of better-known men. There was nothing wrong or underhand about such a proceeding in those days, as the illustrated furniture books were ostensibly published for this very purpose.

If actual design to the smallest detail cannot be taken as proof of authenticity, style is still less of a criterion. Not only were most of the best things imitated, but there were also firms noted for good workmanship, who, knowing their own weakness, actually employed other cabinet-makers to design for them. We are thus led to the conclusion that, given, say, a chair of Chippendale's designing, the chances are more against than in favour of its having come from his workshop, while he could not have actually touched with his chisel more than one in twenty or possibly one in fifty. To the collector, therefore, the work of lesser men should be of far greater interest than it at present is. Nobody would prefer a copy of Reynolds to a genuine Opie, and there is much more difference between these artists than between Manwaring or Ince and Chippendale. There is still no certainty, but the chances of genuineness are vastly greater, and the thing itself little, and occasionally not at all, inferior.

The whole system of business was different in the middle of the eighteenth century from what it is now. Rivalry there must have been, but it was not of a pronounced kind. Over and over again
men with separate businesses joined together in producing books of design, and there seems to have been a curious sort of understanding between them as to not encroaching on each other's spheres. In other books, as in that published by the Society of Upholsterers and Cabinet Makers, the plates are unsigned, each man presumably pointing out to his customers his particular share in it. Thus in Horace Walpole's copy of the book there is a written note showing that the chairs are Manwaring's work.

The number of names which are entirely lost and the number which, when preserved, as they were by Sheraton, were forgotten, is very great, though now that more attention is being paid to the subject more may be discovered. Some of the descendants of men who were in the trade at the time have fortunately preserved the designs of their ancestors, and it is not only to be hoped for, but absolutely likely, that more still may come to light. There are such men as Casement, for instance, who designed a couple of plates for "The Cabinet Makers' Book of Prices," of whom we would gladly learn more.

It is by no means a foregone conclusion that a study of these minor men will leave any certainty in the mind that they deserve being relegated to the background. I have heard both Manwaring and Ince placed before Chippendale, and that by men whose opinions, both from training and study, could not be treated without respect.

I have no wish to preach such revolutionary ideas, being content with the generally admitted
great names, and finding it quite a difficult enough task to place them in their order of merit. I fully believe that if this were to be attempted by the ten men who have given most time to the study of their works there would be nearly as many different arrangements of the four names, and it is by no means unlikely that in some of the lists the name of one of the minor makers might be substituted.

Exactly how much of the excellence of eighteenth century furniture is due to these forgotten and half-forgotten craftsmen we shall probably never know, but every new attempt at research makes their influence more apparent. The earlier portion of the Chippendale period, however, is still almost as dark as ever, and who it was that first had the idea of turning the Queen Anne style into "Chippendale" is a riddle that is likely to remain without a definite answer. It may or may not have been Thomas Chippendale, but in any case there was no sudden change of style as was brought about by Adam, for the Queen Anne influence is strongly marked for some time. It was a gradual evolution; and a gradual evolution, however much it may be influenced by a single personality, can scarcely be the work of a single man. Even in the case of an artist so strongly fixed in his ideas as Robert Adam we find his style, though practically the same for twelve or fourteen years, suddenly altering rapidly, and that just at the time when we know, both from his own words and other sources, that it was being largely followed. With regard to Thomas Chippendale the inference
is even stronger. He was great at adapting; but, so far as can be seen, his genius stopped there. He seldom, if ever, departed from custom, and it certainly never occurred to him to court cheap popularity by breaking violently away from it. Originality, in the sense of being entirely new, was what he never claimed, as it was perhaps the last thing to which he was entitled. Other men, like Manwaring, make the claim in so many words, but Chippendale does not. This is very evidently not because he had any bashfulness about speaking highly of his own work, for, had he considered that he had any such claim it is fairly certain that he, like Manwaring, Adam, and others, would not have been backward in making it. At the close of his life, as well as at the time of the "Director," he was strongly influenced by the work of other men; and if, when his position and reputation were both established, he did not suffer from the conservatism of old age, it is all but certain that he must have been at least as readily influenced when considerably younger. The part, therefore, which was played by men whose names are lost in the formation of the style known (and rightly known) by his name was probably very large. In his early as in his later work, it must have been individuality of feeling more than eccentricity of conception which distinguished it from that of others.

About the middle of the century it became fashionable to publish illustrated books on furniture, and a certain amount of knowledge as regards the minor men is attainable. The first book to con-
tain furniture designs was brought out in 1739 by an architect named William Jones. His drawings of furniture, however, are limited to mirrors and slab tables. The former seem to have had no effect on the cabinet-makers of the time—certainly not on Copeland, who, in 1746, was the first of the trade to attempt publication—but his slab tables were resuscitated by Johnson in 1758, and, through him, affected the third edition of Chippendale's "Director."

The publication by Copeland, just mentioned, is a typical instance of the kind of difficulty we meet with in the attempt to understand eighteenth century furniture. From the libraries of the British Museum and South Kensington upwards and downwards no one seems to have considered it worth while to form a complete collection of the publications relating to the furniture of this period, and the British Museum in particular is so ill-supplied with them as to be practically useless for purposes of reference. At South Kensington an attempt has been made to be somewhat more thorough; but, although the library possesses each important book, it is lamentably deficient in the smaller publications which it was then the custom to produce.

I have seen it stated in a recent article on the Chippendale period that Copeland published at the date mentioned in book form, but all I have been able to find are scattered plates, some of which are bound up in South Kensington library with a collection of a few of Lock's original drawings. If the rest of the book is no better than the plates so preserved the existence or non-existence of a book is
chiefly interesting from the point of view of history, the designs themselves possessing but little merit. At the same time it is another instance of how Chippendale was led by lesser men; the only wonder being that he allowed nine years to elapse before the publication of his "Director."

The book published by the Society of Upholsterers and Cabinet Makers is undated, and it has been held from the unformed state of the drawings that the society had not the "Director" as a model, but, though at one time of a different opinion, I have come to the conclusion that it appeared considerably later. In this book Manwaring designed most of the chairs, and there does not seem to be sufficient difference between his style in this and in his own publication in 1765 to allow of such a long interval as eleven or twelve years between them, especially at this particular time, which was one of rapid change. Another fact which leads to the same conclusion is that Manwaring republished his part of the book with a few additions in 1766, thus showing that he did not consider the style too antiquated to serve as an advertisement. In Chippendale's third edition, on the other hand, there are a large number of plates left out, though there is only eight years between the first and third editions.

With regard to the present study the point is one of considerable interest, and the arguments pro and con. are somewhat evenly divided, for Manwaring is the only contributor of whose work we can be sure, and it must be admitted that he was by no means so progressive in the evolution to lightness as Chippendale.
MINOR FURNITURE MAKERS.

If the Society did not in their publication suggest the idea of an illustrated book on English furniture to Chippendale, some of the other members of the trade certainly did. Lock, as well as Copeland, seems to have published some early plates, and, in 1752—two years before the appearance of the "Director"—he joined him in bringing out a small book of twelve leaves, and from that time till 1769 the two published at frequent intervals either together or separately.

The intention to publish an illustrated book on furniture may have been fairly general; but, except for the size and importance of his publication, the idea did not originate with Chippendale, and it is to the initiative of lesser men that we owe what knowledge we have regarding this school of workers. The unfortunate thing is that such publications did not come sooner. The "Director" is only a guide to one period of Chippendale's work, and that not altogether the best, for he naturally confined himself to what was in fashion at the moment. There is not, for instance, a single claw-and-ball foot or a settee in the "Director," and much of what he considered worthy of a place in it was so saturated with the flamboyant as to be, to say the least, regrettable.

There are strong reasons, therefore, for believing that many of the innovations of this time were not primarily the idea of the great man whose use of them has associated them with his name. It is open to doubt if Adam was the first to introduce the French fashion of painting furniture, or decorating it with plaques, and there is no certainty that
Hepplewhite was the first to use the well-known shield shape for chair-backs.

Adam designed furniture as he did many other things, merely as harmonious accessories to his decorated interiors. His style was so new that everything required alteration, and he considered everything within his province. He was therefore unlikely to invent anything not connected with mere style, though all the more ready to adopt any new idea, from whatever source. His avoidance for so many years, in spite of his knowledge of French design, of the decorations which afterwards proved to be so admirably suited to his furniture, makes it probable that he considered them unsuitable till he saw them actually applied by someone else.

Adam so overshadowed his contemporaries that from the middle of the sixties till Hepplewhite's time no one published anything of importance; this makes several interesting questions very difficult, if not impossible, to settle. One of these is the authorship of the ladder-back chair, the carved specimens certainly, and the plainer shapes probably, beginning in this period. They are almost certainly not the conception of either Adam or Hepplewhite.

In this furniture design differs from such an art as painting. If a painter who is not a master goes out of the beaten track his influence on the stronger men of his time is practically nil; but furniture brings in other possibilities, such as construction, or new combinations of old methods of decoration, which might occur to a man who, without supreme
artistic ability, had thoroughly studied both his trade and its history, as well as making himself conversant with the possibilities of his material.

If, then, the study of minor men is a necessity in painting, it is evidently very much more so in furniture; nor can the necessity of acquiring the knowledge be looked upon as an ungrateful task when, as in the present instance, their excellence is such as to more than repay the trouble.
CHAPTER XI.

ROBERT MANWARING.

There is no royal road to the study of eighteenth century furniture, and there is no easy set of rules for understanding it. There was certainly an evolution to lightness, but it was not continuous. The sideboard table grew more imposing in the hands of Robert Adam, and wide-seated chairs were made even in the time of Sheraton. At present we are chiefly interested in another exception, which is that the chairs of the sixties were actually heavier in design than those of the preceding decade. Without a knowledge of Robert Manwaring's designs, most of the chairs made by him in this period would almost certainly be supposed to have been executed fifteen to twenty years previously, and as a matter of fact this mistake has been made over and over again.

Manwaring's chairs are generally attributed to Chippendale, and there is a great family resemblance, which, however, diminishes under careful scrutiny and leaves the mind impressed both by his artistic taste and his individuality. That is, so far as his best work is concerned, for there was a terrible descent every now and then to bathos and eccentricity. Of all Chippendale's contemporaries
he is probably the most interesting, but he is also the most difficult to study, from the fact that many of the designs which have been attributed to him are certainly by others. Most of this difficulty arises from the fact that Manwaring was one of the leading spirits in the Society of Upholsterers and Cabinet Makers, which published a book entitled "One Hundred New and Genteel Designs, being all the most approved Patterns of Household Furniture in the Present Taste." This is a most interesting book, as it is not by one but by several hands, though it is not so instructive as it might have been had the designs been signed and the book itself dated.

In the Society's book there are twenty-eight plates of chairs which are usually attributed to Manwaring, and most of them probably with justice, though there are others which have no resemblance to his style. It is quite impossible to say what Manwaring might have done in his moments of madness, but such plates as the ribbon-back chairs are so vastly inferior to the example given in his own book, and are so poor, structurally, that I think Manwaring may be fairly exonerated from any blame concerning them. The "fluttering ribbon," to use Mr. Heaton's phrase, is not only fluttering, but waving wildly, whereas in the single design of the kind which is undoubtedly by him it is treated in a more reserved and possible manner. My impression is that those in the Society's book are by Ince, though they may have been the work of one of the forgotten men.

Manwaring's own book, "The Cabinet and Chair
Makers' Real Friend and Companion, or the whole system of chairmaking made plain and easy;" was brought out in 1765; but, as if to make the study of his work more difficult, he republished, in 1766, the twenty-eight designs from the Society's book with forty-seven additional plates (all but one of which are unsigned) under the title of "The Chair Makers' Guide, by Robert Manwaring and others."
The work of the "others" is, in the majority of instances, so inferior that it is no wonder that Manwaring's name should have suffered; nor is it easy to see why, in this instance, the plates were left unsigned. There may have been a reason for the omission in the publication by the Society, where the risk was probably equally shared by several workers, and therefore no man was allowed to advertise his name at the expense of his fellows. It is easy to understand that the designers of the twenty-eight republished plates might be debarred from acknowledging them even in the new form, but there was evidently no rule to that effect in "The Chair Makers' Guide," for Manwaring's name appeared in the title-page, and one of the new plates is signed "Copland fecit." * Manwaring's share in the new plates is evidently very small, which makes it all the more likely that the bulk of the old designs are by him. The first four new plates are almost certainly his, as is also plate 48—a garden seat—but probably nothing else, though there is a distinct resemblance to his style in the plates run-

* Possibly Manwaring may have considered it a better trade advertisement to run the chance of inferior work being mistaken for his than to allow the names of the "others" to appear even on the plates.
ning from 49 to 54, and also in plates 35 and 36. Plate 55 is signed by Copland, and 56 and 57 are also by him, as are 66, 67, and 68, and probably 60 to 65. Of the authorship of the rest it can only be said that they are neither by Manwaring nor by any designer whose works are extant, though many of them show marked peculiarities, proving them to come from the same hand. Plates 33 and 34, for instance, are certainly by the designer of the last

seven plates in the book. It would be interesting, historically, to know his name, but they have practically no artistic excellence. They possess a certain amount of individuality, but it is not of a pleasing kind.

The eighteenth century furniture maker, however much he may have been of an artist, and however much he claimed to be so, did not take himself sufficiently seriously as regarded posterity. He was a shopkeeper, and his books were trade adver-
tisements, produced and published for the sole reason of extending his business. Nor did he give his customers what he himself might consider his best, but his newest work. There was no such stability in design as there had been in previous centuries, for a few years were sufficient to render not only an individual piece but a whole style obsolete. At a time when the language was changing with almost as great rapidity our writers bewailed what they considered to be the inevitable fact that in another century their English would not even be understood. Present acceptation, therefore, was all that the most self-reliant of the eighteenth century designers attempted to achieve. That their furniture is without any distinguishing mark or signature, except in a very few instances, was possibly due to the fashion of a time when the greatest painters did not sign their masterpieces. In the case of such men as Reynolds or Gainsborough whose touch is, or ought to be, unmistakable, the omission of a signature is a matter of small importance; but in furniture-making there is no such guide. There is a legend that Thomas Chippendale was left-handed, and that the pieces carved by himself may therefore be told by the direction of the chisel-marks. Even admitting the truth of the statement, it is difficult to see how knowledge can be derived from it. If a chair were first put together and then carved, something might indeed be told or guessed at; but as the carving was done for convenience in each part separately, so that it could be turned about on the bench for ease in working, it is exceedingly difficult, if not
impossible, to be certain with which hand any particular chisel-mark was executed.

Of the few pieces of signed furniture of which

"Real Friend" (plate 5).

I have heard one seems to have been by Manwaring. I am told of it by a friend, who is one of the few experts that have paid any great attention to this
particular designer, and I have no doubt that he is right in supposing that the M with which a set of chairs were signed stood for his name. When he saw them they were in a private collection, but several years since all the furniture in the house was sold by auction and they cannot now be traced. Even if they could, a single set of chairs might teach us little more than we can learn from his book.

The small amount of recognition given to Manwaring by modern experts is due to several causes. The mixture of his work with that of inferior designers already mentioned is one, but the deplorably inartistic renderings of his drawings is perhaps a still greater. The former is merely an added difficulty in comprehending him; the latter would make a really good design appear worthless to anyone casually turning over the leaves of his book. It is perfectly true that most of the other furniture books of the time suffer from the same cause, but no man with any pretensions to be in the front rank has been so vilely treated at the hands of his engraver.

It is probable that Manwaring was not himself much of a draughtsman; it is certain that he was no critic, for he tells us that the illustrations in "The Cabinet and Chair Makers' Real Friend" are "beautifully executed on copper," which could scarcely arise merely from Christian forgiveness.

So far, I am in no way apologising for Manwaring, I have only been endeavouring to ingratiate myself with such of my readers as are not conversant with his style by finding ready-made excuses for their lack of knowledge. There is, however, an-
other reason, which must be admitted even by his most enthusiastic admirer, for his being relegated to the background. Good as much of his work is, and some of it seems to me to be even great, there

"Real Friend" (plate 7).

is, unfortunately, a considerable percentage of it which, after making every allowance for the lack of artistic feeling in his engraver, falls below the level of any furniture book of the period, not excepting even Johnson's. Both Chippendale and
Hepplewhite were unequal—terribly unequal, but Manwaring is immensely more so, and it is this fact which compels me to acquiesce in the almost universal decision which ranks him with the minor men.

Chippendale's inequality arose from his immense variety of *motif*, Hepplewhite's (if for present purposes we look on A. Hepplewhite & Co. as one man) from occasional want of inspiration. Manwaring suffered from both diseases, for, as regards chairs, he was next in scope to Chippendale, and many of his designs are simply beneath contempt from any possible point of view. If it were not pitiable it would be laughable to find a man who is giving the world a collection of designs, including some which, of their kind, have not been beaten, especially extolling the very worst, as he does his rustic seats. Yet, though any number of blacks do not make a white, it must be remembered that he was by no means the only artist who was a bad critic of his own latest work. Without both enthusiasm and self-reliance good art work is out of the question, and neither of these qualities leads to the coolness of judgment requisite for placing what has been produced in its proper position in the artistic scale.

Though Manwaring, judging from his books, was chiefly a maker of chairs, it would be well to begin the study of his work with his smallest publication, which he entitles "The Carpenters' Compleat Guide to the whole System of Gothic Railing," which is a key to much of his style. In the preface he tells us that "many books of designs for Gothic
and Chinese railing have been published," of which Crunden's seems to be the only one that has come down to posterity.

"Chair Makers' Guide" (plate 23).

Manwaring had no small opinion of himself, but if this is an artistic fault (which is open to doubt) he at least had some reason for valuing his work highly, for there can be no doubt that he was
received by his fellow-workers of the Society as their chief exponent of chair design, and he evidently valued himself accordingly.

He claims originality for his designs, and, like most others of his time, has no diffidence in calling attention to his wares by self-praise. As the brothers Adam did this from their pedestal as architects, it is not surprising to find Manwaring the shopkeeper doing likewise. On one of the plates in his "Gothic Railing," for instance, he has had engraved "Magnificent Gothic Gates." I do not reproduce them, as I do not quite see their magnificence, preferring the design given (No. I.), which is also more instructive as regards the study of his chairs. As these railings are intended for out-of-doors, he gives a recipe—presumably his own—for the making of glue. This he warrants will stand all weathers "till the wood is thoroughly decayed," and speaks of "several years' experience in the use of it." With the merits of this glue I am not interested, the fact worth noting being that his publication was not a bid for fame by a young and unknown worker, but the production of a man of large experience with an old-established business.

Even without this direct proof the fact that Manwaring was no beginner in furniture design might be postulated from his work. In parts it catches the new spirit of simplicity brought in by Adam, but it is only to graft it on to the old. The chair-back remains practically the same in its lines, with here and there, as in plate 5 of his own book (No. II.), a heavier use of ornament than in the "Director"; but the legs, as a rule, are simplified, a very favourite
shape being the square, as shown in this instance, either with or without carved decoration.

A point to be noticed in this illustration is the bracket, which is used much more by him than by any other maker of the time. In "The Real Friend and Companion" he gives eighteen chair-
backs without seats or legs, but for each of them there is a separate bracket, showing how important he considered it.

Chippendale also used the bracket, but for his Chinese or Gothic chairs only, and Manwaring's use of it probably arises from his combination of the square leg with the carved back. When, therefore, we find a chair with a bracket it is probably not by Chippendale: if in addition to the bracket there is a square leg and a carved back, it is possibly by Manwaring; but if, as in plate 7 of the "Real Friend" (No. III.), there is a criss-cross or lattice-work pattern in the splat resembling his Gothic railing, the possibility becomes as near a certainty as it is in the nature of such things to be. Another glance at plate 5 will show a carved ornament running along the lower edge of the front rail, which is also almost, if not quite, confined to Manwaring's work as far as this period is concerned. It occurs in many earlier chairs, but is given only once, and that as an alternative, in the "Director."

His fondness for designing garden railings gave him a better grip of the lattice-work pattern, as applied to chairs, than any of his contemporaries, Mayhew being his only real competitor. Plate 23 of "The Chair Makers' Guide" (No. IV.) is a good sample of his work in this particular form of design. In this note particularly the floral decoration in the centre of the back which is very distinctive of his treatment, his idea being to temper the severe feeling by ornament, as is also shown by the curves in the lower part of the back.

Another chair worthy of notice is that on plate 13.
(No. V.), in which the floral decorations at the junction of the pattern are again employed. If the carving were well executed, which it almost certainly was, this would make an exceedingly fine piece for a collector.

"Real Friend" (plate 11).

Most of the designers of the eighteenth century were infected with what is known as the Chinese craze, and Manwaring was no exception. For the most part, like the furniture-makers' Gothic (which Mr. Heaton calls churchwarden Gothic), it is
scarcely recognisable. The ideas were simply made use of and translated, so to speak, into English, till Anglo-Chinese, if I may be allowed to coin a name for it, came to be a separate style of itself, fairly well defined, but including many things from entirely different sources. It is not for its purity that I would call attention to plate xx in Manwaring's "Real Friend" (No. VI.)—for Mayhew and sometimes even Chippendale was purer—but because I consider it the best chair, if not the best single piece, executed in this particular manner.
CHAPTER XII.

INCE AND MAYHEW.

English furniture of the eighteenth century is by no means an exception to the general rule applicable to other arts, that, for a proper understanding of the great men, a knowledge of their contemporaries is a necessity. This is particularly true as regards Ince and Mayhew, in fact it might be said that a thorough knowledge of Thomas Chippendale is impossible without a careful study of their designs. Many of these are of a very high order of merit; so high, indeed, that in several instances they may well be ranked with the very best, and it is not in any way in depreciation of them that I treat, first of all, of the relation between their publication and the third edition of the "Director."

Their book is entitled "The Universal System of Household Furniture," and the choice of the definite article, when the "Director" was even more universal in scope, is the most arrogant part of the publication. The book is undated, and for this reason has been assigned to several different periods, sometimes to so late a date as 1770, which, if correct, would make the study of eighteenth century furniture more puzzling than it is. Fortunately, how-
ever, the actual date can be ascertained with sufficient exactness by the titles and offices ascribed to the fourth Duke of Marlborough, to whom they dedicate the book. The copy in the library at South Kensington states that he is, amongst other things, "Lord Chamberlain of His Majesty's Household," a post which he held during the greater part of 1762 and the beginning of 1763. In another copy which I have consulted this particular office is not mentioned, while in the later one it is an evident addition, the letters being printed instead of written, making it probable that the first few copies were issued immediately before the duke's appointment to the post early in 1762, and the rest directly afterwards.

One could scarcely dignify the copies (probably few in number) thus brought out as a first edition, because so far as either illustration or letterpress is concerned they are precisely similar, with the exception of this one correction and the numbering of the plates. There are ninety-five of these, many of them, as was customary at the time, containing several different objects; but in the earlier issue, though the "explanation of the plates" given in the beginning of the book is arranged in the order in which they actually occur, only eleven of these plates are correctly numbered.

This is peculiarly interesting, because in the beginning of 1762, as already noticed, Thomas Chippendale also issued some early copies of the third edition of his "Director," where not only are there ten fewer plates than he afterwards incorporated in the work, but, the letterpress of an older
edition being used, the descriptions do not tally with the illustrations. Another important fact with regard to Ince and Mayhew's book is that the plates are executed by Darly, who was also Thomas Chippendale's favourite engraver, but who, so far as his third edition is concerned, was employed only to a very limited extent.

It is evident, therefore, that the two firms must have been aware of each other's intentions, and the mistakes in each of their earliest issues point to the probability of a race between them as to who should be first on the market. I have always held that for some reason or other the third edition of the "Director" was both hurriedly produced and issued, but until, by the courtesy of Mr. Bernard Quaritch, I was given the opportunity of studying one of the earlier copies of "Household Furniture" I could think of no adequate reason. Now it seems to me certain from the more accurate date fixed by this copy as well as from the evidences of haste in both books, that the preparation of Ince and Mayhew's folio volume was undoubtedly the cause.

The likeness between the books by no means stops here. A few of the actual plates might have been transposed without anyone being a whit the wiser, and it is more than merely worthy of remark that where such is the case the plates were engraved by Darly. I would refer the curious in such matters to plates clxxvi. and clxxxiv. in the "Director" and plate lxxv. in "Household Furniture." In all of these there is a realistic treatment of trees, foliage, fruit, etc., which is similar to, yet at variance with, the style of Thomas Chip-
pendale. A careful comparison of these plates points to the view which I have elsewhere strongly urged that, in the third edition of the "Director," we do not get the identity of Thomas Chippendale so much as the individuality of his engravers.

In "Household Furniture," plate lxxv. is signed by Ince, but there is almost as great a resemblance between plate lx. by Mayhew and No. xxxii. of the "Director." More instances might be cited, but these will, I think, be found sufficiently conclusive proofs that, in the study of the publications of the period, the subject is rendered still more difficult by the fact that the engravers did not confine themselves to translation pure and simple.

Mayhew's inferiority to his partner was tacitly admitted even by himself. The name of the firm several years later, as we find both from the "London Directory" and Sheraton's list, was Mayhew and Ince; and though their names occur at the end of the dedication in this order, the title page has it Ince and Mayhew. By far the greater proportion of the plates are by Ince, who is also generally responsible for what is good in design. Mayhew was more successful in his treatment of the Chinese manner than in anything else. Some of his chairs in this style are very pleasantly and simply treated, but as a rule his drawings are both clumsy and outré, showing none of the lightness and daintiness of touch displayed by his partner.

Another fact brought prominently into notice by the early copy mentioned is that the original intention of the authors was to publish a much
larger volume, several of the plates bearing numbers up to 160, i.e., sixty-five more than the number of plates eventually included. It seems curious that the designs should have been made and then thrown aside at the last moment. It may, of course, have been a question of cost both for paper and copperplate printing, but it appears to me to be more likely that they were designedly kept out for
another purpose, an idea which I propose to examine more fully when treating of the publication by the Society of Upholsterers and Cabinet Makers.

If Ince’s claim to high rank among the designers of the eighteenth century rested solely on the drawings he gives of chairs, exceptional merit could barely be claimed for him. Many years afterwards Sheraton speaks of the difficulty of finding a workman who was equally good in both chair-making and cabinet work. This would seem to be almost equally applicable to the designing of the articles mentioned, and, to judge from their books, most of the designers of the eighteenth century seem to have thus specialised. There is no drawing of any piece of furniture, except chairs, which can be put down to Manwaring. Shearer and Casement give none; Lock and Adam very few, and these not up to the standard of their other work. The possible exceptions to this rule are Chippendale and Sheraton—though there may well be two opinions as to whether they were equally successful in both branches of work. In any case, it must be evident to anyone who carefully studies the publications of the “fifties” and “sixties” that Chippendale in his day was the greatest maker of chairs. Manwaring should probably be placed second, if only from his originality of conception, but Ince does not approach either of them in this particular. What is good in his chairs may as a general rule be traced to Chippendale’s influence. In fact, their fault is that they are ultra-Chippendale, though, from a misunderstanding of his model, almost all of them are more or less weak in the design of the
backs. Ince had an unfortunate fondness for the looped pattern in vogue a quarter of a century before, which had been given up by Chippendale previous to the publication of the first edition of the "Director." Yet it is not so much his choice of design but his method of treatment which fails to satisfy. When Chippendale designed a chair-back he was usually as careful with regard to the spaces left between the splat and the side-rails as with the actual design of the splat itself. Ince, on
the other hand, never seems to have fully appreci-
ciated the necessity for studying the spaces thus
left, and occasionally, as in the third chair on
plate ix., the result could scarcely have been worse.
On the other hand, even in his chairs, which I
should be inclined to class roughly as failures, there
is, despite their likeness to Chippendale, a certain
amount of individuality and daintiness of treat-
ment which saves them from hopeless mediocrity.
In the preface we are told that "elegance should
always be joined with a peculiar neatness," and in
his chairs it is evident that where the rules of design
have not been studied, this text has been kept in
mind. On the other hand, there are some cha-
racteristics in his chairs which are practically dis-
tinctive of the man. In one of Chippendale's
"French" chairs the top corners, instead of rising
or being more or less rounded, as was his ordinary
method in this style, are sharply cut off at an
angle, but he only uses the form once and that in
1753. Ince employs it to a very considerable
extent, not only in his French (i.e., stuffed-back)
but in his parlour chairs, and there is throughout
his work in these a distinct tendency to leave out
or modify the rise at the corners so distinctive of
the Chippendale period proper. He may, in fact,
be looked upon as the pioneer in the transition of
the Chippendale shape to that of the Hepplewhite
style, though his designs bear no resemblance to
those of the later period, being simply modific-
tions of existing forms. In one instance (plate lv.)
he gives a design which not only to a certain extent
exemplifies this point, but appears to be a departure
Screen in the style of Ince. From Sir Walter Gilbey's collection.
in another particular from established custom. Both Chippendale and other designers had for their Gothic and Chinese chairs designed square legs with hollow centres, frets, in fact, pieced together. So far as publications go this idea had only been employed with legs of a square pattern till the time of Ince, who used it in another form and for another style of chair. In the "back stool" illustrated (No. 1) it will be seen that the front legs have hollow centres, though from the confused style of the drawing it is difficult to say whether there are three or four of the supporting ridges. Four chairs appear on this plate, and as we are told that "the last has been executed in burnished gold, from the plate, and covered with blue damask," it would seem probable that up to the time of publication none of the others had actually been made. This is a difficulty in the study of "Household Furniture" which is also found in the "Director," particularly in its third edition. Many of the engravings in both are frankly designs for furniture, not drawings of actual pieces.* This, however, rather emphasises the fact of the newness of the idea, which is what the authors would have called "elegant" in itself, and is not only in consonance with the wave of evolution which was tending to lightness but distinctly in advance of its time.

What seems to have been a similar deviation from established custom is seen in Ince's cluster-

* This treatment of wood was not by any means new, for Chippendale had applied it to candle-stands as far back as 1754 and probably before. It is simply its use on a chair leg which is worthy of remark.
Chair in the style of Ince. From Sir Walter Gilbey's collection.
column legs. Cluster columns abound throughout the "Director," which has something like a dozen pieces of furniture in which they are used, more than half of these being bed pillars and the rest heavy pieces of furniture, such as sideboard-tables, book-cases, etc. In all these instances, however, the column is solid; and, indeed, used as supports for massive articles, anything else would have been rather out of place.

The ordinary cluster-column legs which we find in actual pieces of furniture and which are invariably described as "Chippendale" are seldom in one solid piece, being composed of three or more thin cylindrical supports joined together at intervals. I should be sorry to say that Thomas Chippendale never made one of these, but it is at least very doubtful. Throughout all his designs there runs first and foremost the love of the chisel. The perfectly round shape simply does not occur in his published designs, and though legs such as we are considering might be made by the use of the chisel alone without the assistance of the lathe, the feeling of the design when they are thus separated is at variance with all the rest of the knowledge we possess concerning him. I cannot state it as a fact, because all the evidence on the point is of the negative order, but it is certainly my opinion that it is to Ince we owe this simple and beautiful device. In any case, he has at least the honour of being the first to publish a design of the kind. The lady's dressing-table on plate xxxviii., which possesses these separated cluster-column legs, is exceedingly dainty in design. I illustrate a china table from the
China Shelves.
collection of Sir Walter Gilbey, which is extremely typical of his treatment.

It is in pieces of furniture such as this that Ince is at his best; and it is a best which, of its kind, is exceedingly difficult to beat. All through the book there is an attempt at lightness which suggests that he catered more for the boudoirs of ladies than to please the ordinary male fancy. Sometimes he failed miserably. The two *eoineurs* on plate xlvi., for instance, have not one redeeming feature, but now and again, as in the dressing-table alluded to, it is impossible to withhold from him both praise and admiration. The great reason why Ince has not met with the amount of appreciation he would seem to deserve from critics and writers on this period of furniture making, is in all probability his incapacity as a chair-maker. It is much easier to attain to a knowledge of the chairs of the eighteenth century than to that of most of the other articles of furniture, and this very greatly because of the well-marked changes in their design. A chair made in 1750 has scarcely one point in common with a chair of 1790, and each decade is so strongly influenced by the new ideas which were affecting furniture that he who runs may read. In numerous other directions the case is different. Both Chippendale and Ince and Mayhew have serpentine-fronted commodes differing from those of Shearer and Hepplewhite solely in ornamentation, whilst in some other heavy articles, such as bookcases, there is still greater similarity. It is probably on this account that the great majority of amateurs of English eighteenth century furniture specialise
China Case.
in chairs. A fine chair at Christie's will fetch a price out of all proportion to that of equally good pieces of most other classes of furniture.

"Household furniture" is a rare and expensive book which few possess. It is not, I may remark, to be found even in the British Museum, and of the few lovers of the subject who are aware that a copy can be seen at South Kensington, probably nine out of every ten would study the chairs carefully and generalise the rest. It is not much to be wondered at, taking this into account, that while most people know Ince and Mayhew by name their work has received so little real recent attention, though that they must have taken an exceedingly high place in the furniture art of their day is evident from a study of their book and from the effect that it had on later design. Chippendale's third edition, in which few of the new plates were really worthy of the man, had very little influence on succeeding cabinet-makers. He was, unfortunately, led by the reception given to Johnson's foolishly flamboyant illustrations into mistaking a transient phase for a new era, and the greater part of the additions were doomed to extinction before they had the chance of appearing as anything but engravings. Up to 1762, which was the date of the third edition of the "Director," and also (probably) that of "Household Furniture," Robert Adam had not asserted himself (or rather his individuality) in furniture, but just about this date he began to be a living factor in its design, and only what could mix appropriately with his work had a chance of living. It is therefore a matter of considerable importance
and one reflecting the greatest honour on Ince, that, while Chippendale's new designs were the last of an ephemeral craze, many of the new ideas in "Household Furniture" were so far ahead of their time that they actually set the fashion for several years.

The "Chinese taste" is strongly in evidence in many of the plates. In this style Ince left the chairs to his partner, while he confined himself to such objects as china shelves and cases, remarkable for their simplicity of treatment, which cannot be said for his partner's work in these articles.

The china shelf and the china case illustrated (Nos. 3 and 4) are both typical of Ince's treatment. The simplicity of the latter is preserved by the plain triangular leg which is probably another of his devices. The top is decorated by a piece of scroll work at the two front corners, while at the back are two wyverns, probably suggested in this style of design by the Chinese use of the dragon, but really purely heraldic. These are also used by other furniture makers, including Chippendale and Lock, but here they may have been added as a compliment to the Duke of Marlborough, to whom the book is dedicated, one of the supporters of his coat of arms being a wyvern. A departure from custom is noticeable in the last six plates of the book, which comprise grates, fenders, railings, etc. These are not, like the rest, engraved in line, but are etched, probably, from the unformed state of much of the mechanism, by one of the authors.
CHAPTER XIII.

MATTHIAS LOCK.

HEREDITY in art is very much more the exception than the rule. Where it exists at all it is usually the result of environment rather than of natural aptitude, and it is seldom indeed that we find, as in the case of the two Teniers, the son outstripping the father. But where an actual business, such as the making and selling of furniture, is the outcome of artistic capacity in the father, the difficulties in the way of an uninterrupted succession of workers in the same family would seem to be decreased. That, so far as the results go, there is but little difference between this branch of art and others is probably owing to the fact that success requires the somewhat rare combination of business faculties with the artistic.

Of all the eighteenth century designers the least successful commercially seems to have been Thomas Sheraton, and the sons of two of the best known, Chippendale and Lock, took partners into their businesses who, either at once or in time, became senior partners. When Sheraton, in 1803, published a list of the master cabinet-makers of London, there were only a few names left that we can now recognise, among which were Chippendale, Gillows,
and Mayhew and Ince. The last-named firm could scarcely have been composed of the same men who published in 1762, so, especially as there was another Ince working at a different address, it is more than probable that a second generation was referred to. The Gillows, though possessed of considerable taste, seem to have prided themselves more on their business than their artistic qualities, and for a considerable time traded in many forms of merchandise other than the furniture for which we know them. "Thomas Chippendale, junior," as he called himself in his (so far as I am aware) single publication, was probably the third cabinet-maker of his family in direct descent. When Mr. George Lock died suddenly a few years ago, the working time of his family as designers and carvers had covered a space of more than two centuries.

Considerably more is known about Matthias Lock than about most of the contemporary workers, but even in his case the facts are fragmentary, and do not include the date of either his birth or death. Like Chippendale, Lock is chiefly, one might almost say only, known by his weakest work, the difference being that Chippendale's most brilliant phase preceded while Lock's succeeded his period of publication.

If Lock is to be judged entirely on his published designs he has already met with his full share both of praise and recognition, for, as he showed himself in them, it was only as a preacher of nearly the worst form of the flamboyant that he would have to be considered. He had a curious faculty of choosing his worst specimens for publication, and
the result is surprisingly bad. They are consider-
ably more impossible than Chippendale's most awful
absurdities, and scarcely, if at all, removed from
the bathos of Johnson (for whose work some designs
might easily be mistaken): moreover, he is cer-
tainly the chief sinner as regards the mixture of
realistic foliage and wildly flamboyant curves.
This realism, combined with an occasional strong
leaning to Italian influence, differentiates his work
in this style from that of his contemporaries, but,
except in a few instances, it is distinctive without
attaining distinction.

Lock had a wonderfully all-round knowledge of
art methods. He was deft with both pen and
pencil; he knew the technique of water-colour as
it was understood in his day perfectly, and he had
considerable acquaintance with etching. This last
is to be regretted, for instead of employing com-
tent engravers to do his work he etched his plates
himself. His success with the brush would make
it probable that had he attempted a more artistic
style of rendering his designs the results would have
been much better, though whether his customers
would have appreciated the plates or not is another
matter. He was, therefore, very possibly wise in
his day and generation when he decided on making
his plates as like line engravings as his knowledge
permitted, though in doing so he put himself into
competition with men who had been studying a
difficult mechanism for a lifetime. Whatever he
could do with the pencil he had not enough con-
trol over the point on copper to give the necessary
precision of line. He was not sufficiently con-
versant with grounds and acids to bite a line clean even if properly made, while his attempts at ruling are so unequal as almost to daze the eye. As an imitation of line engraving, or even as etching pure and simple, it is the merest prentice work, and it is only fair to take the fact into account when criticising the designs. It is just as impossible to succeed in a difficult method such as this without having the whole of the mechanism at one’s finger ends, as it would be to write a book in a language that necessitates the constant use of a dictionary. Lock’s
failure was a foregone conclusion; that he succeeded even as well as he did is astonishing.

In looking at his publications we must therefore not only remember that if they had been better done they would have been more pleasing, but that the convention of the day was such that there was no more resemblance between the engraving and the actual piece than there is now between a fashion-plate and the article of raiment it represents. Even had he been much more conversant with the use of pencil, brush, or point than he was, his tool was the chisel, and by that he must be judged. His designs for frames and sconces look thin and flat, suggesting the fret-saw with a top dressing of the chisel, whereas they were actually cut out of wood of a considerable thickness, thus giving the added quality only obtainable by high relief. In this way certain of the more objectionable points, such as the realistic foliage, were subordinated, and when, for the hard conventional line, the livelier cut of the chisel was substituted, the piece at once became more homogeneous.

There is an alcove frame at Claydon House, illustrated in The Burlington for April, 1904, which has all his characteristics, and which I take to be undoubtedly by Lock, not only because his chief characteristics are plainly in evidence, but because a rough sketch of it, or a similar piece, has been preserved (p. 177). It was the habit of several, possibly all, the furniture makers of the eighteenth century to put in their cost-books a sketch of each article of furniture manufactured. These were in no sense designs, but simply rough jottings from memory
sufficiently like the object to serve for future reference. The sketch reproduced from Lock's ledger is one of these. It has several differences, but, considering its primary purpose, it resembles the Claydon frame so closely as to make it at least possible that it was the article intended, and, if not, and there were two such pieces, it is practically certain that they emanated from the same brain and the same workshop.

I hold no brief for the flamboyant, in fact, very much the reverse. My natural man rebels against
it as a disastrous misunderstanding of the French, and Johnson, its chief, or perhaps I should say maddest apostle, I have only the patience to take seriously while studying the effect of his designs on the third edition of the "Director." When speaking of the style I therefore endeavour to keep before my eyes the danger of adversely criticising that with which I am not artistically in touch. But if I have wronged Lock from inherent inability to appreciate the style he first chose for expression, I can at least attempt to be just to his memory as regards what appears to me to be the motive for his incessant publications.

The interior fittings of a room which at one time had come into the province of the architect had been gradually slipping out of his hands and into those of the carver. Whether Chippendale, Lock, and the other men of the time made the best use of their opportunities is open to serious doubt, but it was only natural that they should choose the style which, of all within their reach, gave fullest scope to their craft. Had they given to what they took that touch of sobriety and stateliness which is usual in English versions of foreign ideas, instead of, as they actually did, adding a suspicion of insanity, it is possible that the foreign plant might, like so many others, have taken root and flourished. As it was, it was too far removed from English ideas ever to form an integral part of the English home, and it simply awaited the time and the man.

When Robert Adam returned from Italy more full of ideas for interiors than exteriors there was very soon a swing back of the pendulum, and not
only the fixtures but the movables became every
day more and more the care of the architect. Now
Adam, who, when he was given a free hand as
regarded expense, used carving, and used it lavishly,
had not only no special reverence for the chisel,
but held a patent for a compound with which he
imitated its work. His designs, though they ad-
mitted of carving, and, indeed, were often so exe-
cuted, were specially adapted for the cheaper
method, and the fight for the supremacy of wood
over stucco could only be decided in favour of the
former if a style were chosen and made fashionable
which did not lend itself so much to imitation. The
flamboyant certainly existed in England before
1758, but in a very subdued form, and it is curious
to mark how from that date it suddenly developed
into its most rampant and aggressive shape. Adam
did not preach against the style; he even used it, or
allowed it to be used, under his directions as at
Claydon House, and that there was no enmity
between him and the carvers is evidenced by the
fact that so many of them worked for him. It was
quite a friendly fight, but there can be no doubt
about the fighting. All that was worst in
eighteenth century design was published in the
next four years. Johnson, who, though by far the
least capable, seems to have been the prime mover,
published two editions of his large book, and also
another, probably smaller, which seems to have
been fortunately lost. Even the great Chippendale
joined the fray in defence of his craft in a way
which has laid him open to the criticism of those
whose business it is to look for blots.
After 1762 the other carvers seem to have resigned themselves to fate, and, except for Copeland, with whom he collaborated, Lock fought on single-handed. It was a good fight, for it was the war of the chisel against the mould, of the real against the sham, of the loving work of the skilled English craftsman against the Italian caster. The cause was good, and the only regret one can have is that the side issue chosen was not worth the fighting. In 1768 Lock made a last despairing effort, and in the following year signified his acquiescence in the new order of things by publishing a small book entitled "Pier Frames, Tables, etc.," in the style of Adam.

While writing of some of the likenesses between Chippendale and Ince and Mayhew, I called attention to the remarkable resemblance in treatment between the nude figures in certain of their plates, mentionning at the same time that where such resemblance occurs the engravings are by Darly. In any case this would accentuate whatever the originals may have possessed in common, but it is by no means the only explanation. In a book containing a collection of Lock's original drawings presented by his grandson to South Kensington Museum there is a quick pencil sketch which I have no doubt is the original of plate lxxv. in "Household Furniture."* It is exceedingly slight, a mere hurried note, but as the plate shows the design reversed it is evident that the sketch is first in point of time. For reasons which I have already sufficiently gone into I do not think the sketch can be

* Plate ii., page 217.
Original sketch by Lock.
by Ince, though it may be by Darly (or even some other man of whom we have no knowledge) and have been preserved by Lock, who had several scraps of other men's work in his collection. It is, however, so like in style to the more rapid of his pencil jottings that I have very little doubt as to its authorship. As a sketch its chief merit lies in the evident rapidity of its production, but if, as I think, it is by Lock, it effectually disposes of the legend that Chippendale had an open rupture with the rest of the trade; for whatever hand drew this most certainly also designed the plates which resemble it in the "Director."

It is not too much to say that if the old roughly-illustrated ledgers had been preserved, their historical value would have been greater than that of all the publications of the time. I only know of one such, and in that, most unfortunately, the addition of drawings begins at a later date. From the preservation of so much of Lock's designs I had hopes that his original books might still be in existence, but, I am sorry to say, this is not the case, and the benefit which might have been derived from the drawings we have is minimised by the lack of dates, each of them having been cut out and pasted into another book. It is impossible now to say when or by whom this was done, but the lesson is rendered more obvious by the fact that it must have been by someone of his own blood, to whom Lock's personal history and reputation was of more consequence than it is to us.

One interesting sketch, though it is not by Lock's own hand, is of a masonic chair, ornamented with
compasses, square, stars and many other emblems of which I cannot even give the names. It was evidently of very solid make, and, as it must have been commissioned by some lodge, is probably still in existence. Possibly some of my initiated readers may know of the whereabouts of such a master's
chair. It would be the more interesting as the authorship of such masters' chairs as I am acquainted with depends solely on tradition.

It is only necessary to glance over the collection of Lock's original drawings in South Kensington Museum to be struck by the fact that when he finally relinquished the flamboyant he at once took a higher place as an artist. Without even considering the relative merits of the two forms there can be no doubt which suited him best. In the former style he could not compare with Chippendale, and he was nearly as incongruous as Johnson. His search for the weird and wonderful in beasts and birds led him into strange and sometimes laughable antics. Imagine any man representing a fiery dragon as burning on a plate on the top of a raised pedestal. It would be a truly magnificent idea for a children's Christmas number, but as an attempt at serious art, it is, perhaps, more contemptible than any single production of the school.

It is a difficult thing to reason from the known to the unknown, and without his actual work to see and handle, it would be nearly impossible to fix on a more unlikely designer to be influenced by the dignified daintiness of Adam. Yet that he not only succeeded, but succeeded better than any of his contemporaries, is evidenced by his work. There is certainly a loss of identity, which, bad or good, is always regrettable; but he was using a new language, and he caught his master's accent rather too accurately.

Adam himself had formed his style in ornament very greatly on the study of one man, but the years
he had spent in France and Italy had given him so wide a range of view that the exponent of the classic to whom he was most indebted rarely appears too evidently in anything but the minor parts of a design. Lock, with all his varied capabilities, had no such mine of knowledge stored ready for use. Kent and Chambers had never affected his work, and to him the classic style was simply another name for Robert Adam's. It must be admitted that Lock, in this latest phase, was indistinguishable from his master, but he had learnt his lesson so well that I question the possibility of always separating them. This does not sound very high praise artistically, but when we remember the numerous men who have failed in the same attempt, both then and since, it is greatly to the old carver's credit.

It is also worthy of praise, though even more astonishing, that he chose for imitation the finer and simpler form of Adam's art; in fact, for sheer simplicity combined with grace he at least equals, if not surpasses, the great architect. Yet another noteworthy point is that where Italian influence shows in his later work it is purely derived from Adam. Considering his record it would have been more likely to have found him, like Pergolesi, an Italianised edition of Adam.

There is not only an improvement in style in this later work but in the mechanism and feeling of his drawings. The sketches show a greater command of hand, and the finished work more knowledge of the medium. It is evident that he had carefully studied not only Adam's style but his water-colour
methods. Both the drawings reproduced* are indistinguishable from Adam's treatment, even down to the plain green tint washed over the stuffed parts of the chair, except that he has adhered to the sudden perspective of his youth, and, by representing the chair as a single on one side and an arm on the other, given that lop-sided effect that is common in the furniture plates of the time, but does not occur in anything by Adam.

Though some of Lock's small mirrors would explain better what I have said regarding simplicity, I have chosen a pier table and glass for reproduction, to show how that feeling pervaded the more pretentious and complicated of his later designs.

* Plate i., page 215, Nos. 2 and 3.
CHAPTER XIV.

THE SOCIETY'S BOOK.

The book published by the Society of Upholsterers and Cabinet-makers, which they called "Upwards of One Hundred New and Genteel Designs," was brought out in parts, and that it met with a considerable amount of acceptation in its day is evidenced by the fact that the proposed number of the designs was ultimately more than doubled. As it is the work of several of the craftsmen of the time, the designs differ very widely both in intention and merit. In many instances the designers have followed the example of Lock and Copeland and etched their plates themselves. As there are scarcely any of these which are well drawn, and none which can be considered even moderately well executed, the results are, in a large number of instances, miserably poor. In all the furniture books of the eighteenth century till that brought out by the brothers Adam we have to make allowances for the crude and unsympathetic rendering of the ideas, but it is especially necessary with regard to most of the Society's books. Manwaring had the misfortune to entrust his plates to an incompetent engraver, and though there are several engraved
by Couse, Clowes, and Darly (to which only the first mentioned added his name), the majority are bad, and many are worse than anything else in the publications of the time.

The theory of etching is one of the simplest things in the world; its artistic use one of the most complex and difficult; and it is well to bear this in mind when considering the designs in which it was employed by amateurs. It is exceedingly hard to do so, for the finest work of art in the world might be made to appear poor in a bad reproduction; yet it is necessary to make the attempt if we wish to arrive at a discriminating knowledge of the designs of the period. In many cases it is all but impossible to do so without an acquaintance with actual pieces of the kind portrayed. Copeland’s chairs, for instance, with their puzzling interlaced curves, are by no means despicable when we find them carefully constructed in well-chosen mahogany.

The "Hundred New Designs" is so full of artistic failures that we can scarcely wonder at Sheraton's comments on it. "As I have alluded," he says, "to some books of designs, it may be proper here to say something of them. I have seen one which seems to have been published before Chippendale's. I infer this from the antique appearance of the furniture, for there is no date to it; but the title informs us that it was composed by a Society of Cabinet-makers in London. It gives no instructions for drawing in any form, but we may venture to say that those who drew the designs wanted a good share of teaching themselves. Chippendale's
Sideboard Table in the style of Johnson.
book comes next in order to this, but the former is without comparison to it, either as to size or real merit."

The chief point of interest in this criticism is the date he assigns to the production of the book which has been followed by succeeding writers— rashly, I consider, since they have left out of account the fact, afterwards admitted by Sheraton, that when he wrote his preface he had seen only the third edition of the "Director," to which, therefore, his words must refer. There is nothing of which I am aware, so far as regards the internal evidence of the book itself, to make it even unlikely that it might have been published shortly before 1762; but the case is entirely different when a date prior to 1754 is contended for. Sheraton may be the more readily forgiven for assuming an early date as he is quite right regarding the "antique appearance." Manwaring incessantly, and many of the others occasionally, had a habit of reverting to old forms, and as he does not seem to have been acquainted with Manwaring's "Real Friend," which is dated, he had no clue to guide him, nor had he seen Johnson's publications, which also bear on the question of date. Sheraton's avowed purpose in publishing his book was to provide workmen with the means of making correct drawings of the pieces designed, and his rough summary of the illustrated furniture books was chiefly to show the necessity for his "Drawing Book." As a rule, he only criticises them from that standpoint, and in the present instance is careful to qualify his statement by pointing out that it is merely an inference.
In writing on Manwaring I pointed out the arguments against an early date for the first part which deals with chairs; with regard to the furniture in the second and third parts there is even stronger evidence. The ultra-flamboyant, as preached by Johnson and affected by Chippendale and Lock, only came into existence in 1758 with the publication of Johnson's book, but in the Society's publication there are several designs in the very height of the style, which are manifestly by him. The sideboard-table (No. 1)* is one of these which, as Count Smorltork would have said, "by himself surprises" most of the characteristic insanities of the school.

* Plate i., page 405.
The table itself is of a shape reintroduced into English design by Johnson in 1758, and immediately copied by both Chippendale and Lock. The central ornament is a duck or goose, and from the support on which it stands the flamboyant carver's convention for dripping water is shown. Directly under this, on the straining rail of the table, is seated a mandarin, much too small in proportion, who, with his head on one side, seems to be enjoying his shower-bath. Structure is regarded as little as any attempt at meaning, for on the legs are perched the long-beaked and long-tailed birds which are also trade-marks of the style. In this piece the tails protrude so far beyond the table as to make it certain that, if constructed of anything weaker than cast iron, they could not stand a month's ordinary usage, and in any case would be very much in the way if the table were made for anything else than mere show. There cannot, I think, be much doubt as to Johnson's authorship in this instance, particularly as the style of the engraving resembles Clowes as strongly as that of the design suggests the only man (except Chippendale) who employed him for furniture. That even Johnson was not working in this caricature of the style at the time of the first edition of the "Director" is shown by a small publication he brought out in 1755, consisting of twelve girandoles, which is precisely in the style of Chippendale, Lock, and Copeland of that time, and, though it possesses no other merit, is useful by confirming the date of his larger publication as that of the practical introduction of the more obtrusive form of flamboyance.
Commode "Cloaths" Press. In the style of Ince.
Among the odds and ends preserved by Lock there is a frontispiece for a small book by Johnson, dated 1760. This book does not seem to be extant, though, unfortunately, the fact that it does not appear in our national collections is by no means a proof of non-publication.

As has already been pointed out, Ince and Mayhew’s* original intention was to have given at least sixty-five more plates than they actually did. What happened to Johnson’s drawings can only be guessed, but a study of the Society’s book will leave little doubt in anyone’s mind that Ince and Mayhew reserved many of their designs for it. One book is a folio, the other a quarto, and the plates have not been simply cut down to fit the paper as in Johnson’s second edition, but engraved on a smaller scale. The first few copies of “Household Furniture” must have been issued either late in 1761 or early in 1762, so, if this theory be accepted, the earliest possible date for the second part of the Society’s book would be late in 1762. The latest possible, considering Manwaring’s share in the first part, would be 1764, and to the time between these dates all of it may, with propriety and probability, be assigned.

It is curious to notice that not only has Sheraton’s rough guess at the date of this book been accepted as history, but a story has grown up round it. Chippendale is supposed to have quarrelled with the Society after the book had been partly done, and published the “Director” on his own account. One author even goes so far as to say that some of

* Page 48.
the plates are the same as many in the "Director." There is certainly a very considerable resemblance, not only in general style but in actual structure of individual pieces, between some of the plates; but the difference in scale makes it impossible that they can have been printed from the same plate.

One of the plates in which this resemblance is very marked is the writing-table here illustrated (No. 2). If this is compared with plate lxxiv. of the third edition of the "Director" (which plate is dated 1753), it will be seen that there are but a few structural alterations, and that the ornament and the shape of the three alternative designs for
legs are the only differences. The plate is also evidently engraved by Darly, Chippendale's favourite engraver, which adds still more to the likeness. There is a similar unity of intention between plate 44 of the "Hundred Designs" (No. 3)* and cxxxii. of the "Director." There is a slight accentuation of the flamboyance in the latter, but it is by no means more marked than in many instances which could be shown in Chippendale's first edition, and both designs might have been produced at the same time. Though this provides a ready-made excuse for such as contend for the earlier date, it shows, on the other hand, how careless and superficial was Sheraton's study of the book. If he honestly thought all these plates to be prior to Chippendale, he could scarcely have called him, as he did, a "real original," and some at least of the praise he bestowed on him should have been shared with this designer. To me these, and several others which might be mentioned, seem in no way inferior to the designs they resemble in the "Director"; on the contrary, they approach them so nearly in merit as well as structure and style, that if they were found loose in a folio, it would be rash to hazard the statement that they were not by Chippendale himself. The question of their authorship is very much one of date. If they were produced in the early fifties the most likely name would be Chippendale's; if in the sixties, that of Ince. Though Ince had a style of his own and a very decided one, which is abundantly in evidence elsewhere in the book, there is no denying

* Plate i., page 405.
"Chest of Drawers,"

THE SOCIETY'S BOOK.
the fact that much of his work is frankly formed on Chippendale's; but it is Chippendale of the first
and not the third edition to whom he is indebted. He was influenced, as he could scarcely help being,
by the flamboyant wave, but not nearly to the same extent as Chippendale and Lock. If Ince's
candle-stands, for instance, are compared with Chippendale's of the same year (1762), the styles are
quite different, but if with those of the first edition, it will be seen that they are so similar as to be
almost, if not quite, indistinguishable.

The "linnen chest" (No. 4)* and the chest of
drawers (No. 5)†, have also a strong family likeness
to similar objects of the early "Director" period.
For the former article Chippendale has six designs
which he calls "cloths chest" if the lid is made to
rise, and "cloths press" if the front opens. All
these plates, on which the date 1753 appears, are
repeated in the third edition, but he gives no new
designs, possibly because these, being somewhat
more ornate than most of his work at the time,
sufficiently represented his views at the later period.
There are several of these objects in the Society's
book, in all of which the ornamentation has been
kept down; precisely, in fact, what one would
expect from Ince, but not from Chippendale; for
had the latter added to his list of them in 1762 the
new designs would have followed the same lines of
development as the rest of the edition.

The chest of drawers is also closely allied to a
similar article in Chippendale's first edition. It is,
as will be seen, simply a variant of the commode

* Plate i., page 405
† Plate ii., page 408.
Desk and Bookcase.
clothes press, and, if the alternative design of the traceried door had been adopted, would have been described under that name. In this piece it is evident that the upper drawers were suggested by Chippendale's design, and adopted without sufficient thought as to their use, for while Chippendale's stood some six feet high (which was bad enough) this, measured by the scale given, would be nearly eleven feet! This is an oversight as to convenience which is without parallel in the whole of the "Director."

It will be seen, therefore, that there was considerable justification not only for Sheraton's remark on the "antique" appearance of many of the drawings, but also for the universally received date. This was all the more forgivable, as Ince and Mayhew's book, which might have been some guide, was undated.

The chief arguments for the later date are that Manwaring in 1765 was still designing in the same style, and that in the following year he republished his part of the work; that the ultra-flamboyant of Johnson was a recent phase, and that the plates by Ince and Mayhew are precisely of the style affected in their book, for which they had several unused designs in hand.

I make no apology for treating this question at such length, for, while the actual date is of interest to the book collector, it is of primary importance to anyone who would understand the evolution of English eighteenth century furniture in the sixties. It was a time of unrest; for change was in the air, and no man could tell what would come next.
Robert Adam had not asserted his individuality in furniture, and, while some went back to old models, others borrowed from the most inflated French, or invented absurdities of their own, and nowhere else can the resulting medley be seen so well.

A quite unexpected note of simplicity of treatment appears in some of the furniture, as in the desk and bookcase illustrated (No. 6),* which is like the work of no well-known name at the time, but curiously resembles Shearer's of a quarter of a century later in its attempt to arrive at distinction by attending to proportion, spacing and arrangement, without the use of ornament.

* Plate ii., page 408.
There are several plates in the "Gothic" style, which also appear to be by some unknown man, but the second and third parts are chiefly the work of Johnson, Ince and Mayhew; the last two designers giving several objects only to be found elsewhere in their book. It would seem, in fact,

as if it had been arranged to produce the book in parts so as to give a controlling interest in the first to Manwaring, and in the second and third to Ince and Mayhew, though, as a matter of fact, both these last have plates in the first as well.

The concluding part is given up to iron and metal work, of which several books of the time had examples—usually very unsatisfactory as regards iron.
These seem mostly to be by one hand and are much better than any ironwork given in the other books. Of these I illustrate a "door top" and a "sign iron" (Plate ii., p. 408). The last plate in the book is of special interest, as, if style goes for anything, it is certainly by Thomas Chippendale. It is a page of brass "escutcheons, handles, etc.,” and has each of the characteristics of these objects as given in his third edition, down to the ribbons and shells used in their decoration. Taken as a whole, the book has scarcely had fair treatment, possibly from its unimportant size, which was one of Sheraton's objections to it, as well as the terrible manner in which much of it, especially in the first part, is produced. Even if it had all the artistic faults in the universe we should remember that it at least succeeds—where more pretentious books have failed—in giving us an accurate idea of the actual furniture of its period.
CHAPTER XV.

ROBERT AND RICHARD GILLOW.

Our knowledge of the circumstances of most of the famous eighteenth century furniture makers is exceedingly limited, being in many cases confined to the books they published; but much more information has been preserved regarding the firm of Gillows, both as men and workmen, though they never advertised themselves, like so many of their contemporaries, by producing a book. One reason for this is that the business has been carried on continuously for over two hundred years, and though for a considerable time no one of the name has taken an active interest in it, both books and papers have been carefully preserved. The "cost books" of the firm, in which it was usual for the clerk who kept them to insert rough sketches of the pieces mentioned, form a perfect mine of information, unobtainable elsewhere, regarding the introduction and growth of certain styles. These are rendered all the more useful from the fact that they were not show drawings got up to attract attention, but records of actual furniture made in the Lancaster workshops.

Robert Gillow, the founder of the firm, seems to
have been entirely a self-made man. Somewhere about the close of the seventeenth century he left Great Singleton, and went to Lancaster, in which city he started business as a joiner. Even after he had attained to affluent circumstances he did not disdain working with his own hands at garden palings and jobs of a similar character, for all was fish that came to Robert Gillow's net. That the joiner's shop should have grown into a high-class furniture-making business is only what might be expected to happen in the case of a man of his force of character; but it is curious to find him setting up as somewhat of a general trader. His choice of Lancaster as the place for carrying on his business probably led to this. Its shipping came next to that of Bristol, and it struck Robert Gillow that money was to be made by exporting furniture, which he did on a very large scale. As he seems to have accepted payment in kind, he made a double profit by selling the imported goods himself, and one of his chief trading places being the West Indies, he became a licensed dealer in rum. He was a furniture maker, an undertaker, a jobbing carpenter, and a spirit merchant, beside several other things too numerous to mention. In fact, he put his hand to anything and everything that came in his way, without stopping to consider whether it was either high class or artistic.

Somewhere about 1740 Robert Gillow began shipping furniture to London, which, considering that this was about Thomas Chippendale's best period, must have appeared to some of his friends almost as unwise as the proverbial sending of coals
to Newcastle. Robert Gillow, however, knew what he was about. Neither he nor his son Richard, whom he took into partnership in 1757, ever posed as a great designer; in fact, from this point of view, they greatly undervalued their creations; but they prided themselves, and with justice, on the finish and excellence of their workmanship. These tentative shipments must have met with a ready sale in the metropolis, for as early at least as 1744 Gillow started a London branch, which he describes in his ledger as "The Adventure to London," a phrase which suggests rather some barbarous and newly-discovered country than the first city of the world.

For some time the London branch of the business appears in the directory as "Gillow & Barton, near the Custom House, Thames Street"; but in 1765 they took a lease of the land on which their present business premises are situated. This is another curious instance of Robert Gillow's propensity for never doing anything like other people. Instead of setting up in St. Martin's Lane, the Tottenham Court Road, or some other centre of the industry, he built his new premises in what was then the very outskirts of London, where but few people passed, except when they went to see a hanging at "Tiburn." But what for the ordinary man would have been merely courting disaster, only brought to Gillow his accustomed success, and "The Adventure to London" soon became a principal part of his business.

The firm continually changed its designation. Barton seems either to have died or dropped out, and when the move was made to Oxford Street it
was as Gillow & Taylor. Taylor died shortly afterwards, and the firm became Gillows—Robert, Richard & Thomas; in 1790 Robert Gillow & Co., and in 1811 (on the death of Richard) G. & R. Gillow & Co. The London partners were probably taken into the firm rather as salesmen than prac-

tical cabinet-makers, for all the furniture continued to be made in Lancaster. The only available means of carriage between Lancaster and London for large consignments of goods was by sea, which probably accounts for the choice of the Thames Street shop in the first instance; and a possible explanation of
how the Gillows were enabled to compete with other cabinet-makers in London is that they themselves, being foreign merchants as well as cabinet-makers, imported the mahogany of which most of their furniture was made.

Richard Gillow, who was made a full partner at the age of twenty-three, was a man of just as strong character as his father. Though Robert made a business out of nothing, and even in his old age retained the enthusiasm and business dash of youth, it was Richard who raised it to the front rank. The old joiner had probably felt the want of education, and being a Catholic sent his son to the famous college of Douay. That Richard Gillow thus had the education of a gentleman may partly account for the fact that the firm had on its books not only the names of the greater part of the nobility, but of royalty itself; and may also, apart from the thoroughness of the work they turned out, explain how so much of Adam’s furniture was entrusted to them.

Richard Gillow was somewhat of a character, and cared nothing for prince or peer. Several stories are told of him illustrating the independence of his attitude when dealing with the most exalted personages, and one of these, though it has already been told elsewhere, gives a side of his character so thoroughly that I make no excuse for repeating it. He was one day showing a table, priced eighty guineas, to a nobleman: "It’s a devil of a price," said his lordship. "It’s a devil of a table," replied the independent salesman, and the deal was concluded there and then.
It is not known whether Richard Gillow had any special architectural training, but it is probable that he had; for from the time of his joining the firm they had a considerable business as architects.

Chair made in 1789 for Mr. de Trafford.

The Lancaster Custom House was designed by him, and is a very meritorious piece of work in the Adam style; and that he also had technical knowledge of this subject is evidenced by the fact that he not only made out all the required specifications, but himself superintended its erection.
He was also somewhat of an inventive genius. The first billiard table emanated from him, and in 1800 he invented and patented the telescopic dining-table, one of the most useful of furniture inventions, and certainly, of all such patents, the most universally used. It is probable, from the artistic capacity shown in his architecture, that Richard either made or superintended the designs of the firm, and it is by no means unlikely that it is to his inventive faculty we owe the "shield-back" chair, usually associated with the name of Hepplewhite. The first rough sketch for a chair of this kind which occurs in the Gillows' books is dated 1782, and if not the first must at least have been among the earlier specimens of the shape. In 1788 there is a sketch in the cost-book of a chair which has a back composed of interlacing hearts, a shape that is usually credited to Hepplewhite, but does not appear in the "Guide." The design would seem to be more correctly assigned to the Gillows, for it is so graceful and striking that, had such a pattern been made by Hepplewhite, it is impossible to understand its exclusion from his book, since it is equal to most of the best of his plates, and very distinctly better than the greater proportion of them.

The chair sketched in the cost-book has a shaped front and arms of the same pattern as are seen in the chair made for Mr. de Trafford in the following year; but the single chair illustrated sufficiently explains the general idea of the design. In both of these chairs there are marked differences from what, so far as the evidence goes, was the use and
wont of the time, not only in the very distinctive treatment of the backs, but in that of the arms. Sheraton gives no arm of the kind; and though Hepplewhite, in one of his cabrioles, makes use of the pateræ on the terminals, it is not only without other carving, but is distinctly different in shape. It was, however, continually used by the Gillows, and may therefore be considered as originating with them.

If the differences between these sketches and the published designs of the time were found only in a few isolated instances, it would be manifestly unfair
to base on them a claim to special originality of conception; for the omission of any particular form from a book such as the "Guide" does not necessarily prove that it was not manufactured in the Hepplewhite workshops. It would, in fact, be still more surprising if the cost-books of any firm of the time, had they been preserved, did not show similar differences; but the extent to which these occur in the Gillows' books, and the marked nature of the differentiation, are so striking as to make it impossible to deny an artistic and original personality.

The connexion of the firm with the Adams is evidenced by pieces such as the commode illustrated, but they also had acquired a distinctive style of their own. The sketchy but undeniable examples to be found in their books are far too numerous for illustration or even for descriptive mention, and at least some of them may be safely credited to the firm. We have, for instance, the first ladder-back chair, which probably assumed the shape we know it best by about the middle of the eighties, but which, though an important part of the design of the period, is unnoticed elsewhere. Then there are several sideboard-tables of quite a new shape, in which grace of design has been happily blended with attention to use as pieces of dining-room furniture. Many of these are semi-circular, and, as the line of the front follows that of the back, a servant standing in the concave space in front could reach, almost without moving, any dish placed upon it.

It is remarkable, too, that in several instances
where the Gillows differ from the other workers of the eighties we find the designs reproduced with only a few minor alterations by Sheraton several years later.

Such an instance of Sheraton's unacknowledged indebtedness to Gillows is the "broken fronted" pier-table facing page 371 of the "Drawing Book,"

which is nearly identical with the Gillows' work of five years before. This design can, practically with certainty, be claimed for them. At the time of its manufacture Sheraton had not even come to London, and there is nothing resembling its lines either in the "Guide" or in the original sketches by Robert Adam preserved at the Soane Museum.
To a prospectus or a trade advertisement one very naturally applies the old rule of taking half the assumed amount and dividing it by three. To accept any business firm at their own estimate of themselves would, in an ordinary way, show a considerable lack of judgment; yet if I do not take the firm of Gillows as it existed at the end of the eighteenth century at its own valuation, it is because, from my point of view, that valuation is too low. In a small historical account of the firm recently published by them, to which I am indebted for the biographical part of this article, no claim is made to a place in English furniture design. They say, and with reason, that their furniture of the date we are considering was of the best from the point of view of construction, but they do not go further. As regards the work executed by them through the greater part of the nineteenth century this is absolutely true, just as it was of that of most other firms. "That's the worst about them," said Whistler, speaking suo more, regarding the pigments supplied by the artists' colourmen of the present day, "they won't fade"; and my chief objection to the furniture of the nineteenth century is that the most of it can only be destroyed by the use of a sledge hammer. During this most terrible period in the history of our design the Gillows became a much too accurate reflex of surrounding influences, and their finished workmanship, where every joint and tenon was made only too well, is a thing to be deplored; but, during the lifetime of Richard Gillow, or at least that part of it when he was presumably at his best, it would seem, as far
as the evidence goes, that they were not followers of any particular man or school, but actually pioneers.

In the books of the firm several of the designs appear under names by which they would not now be recognised. A "fiddle-back chair" is the description given to what we now know as "ladder-back," and the name would seem to have originated from a fancied resemblance between the open spaces in the lateral bars and the sound holes of a violin. The "shield back," too, began life as the "camel back," presumably from its central hump, while the chairs with a rounded stay rail and straight uprights are described as "pan-back."

With much that is new there is also in these
books much that is old; in fact, as far as my knowledge goes, they give almost the only historical data of the resuscitation, so common in the furniture of the concluding years of the eighteenth century, of antiquated forms.

It was not, however, solely by the designs of the middle Chippendale period that the Gillows and other workers of their time were affected, though with regard to this it is difficult to say if the later pieces which suggest Ince's and sometimes Man-
waring's work of the sixties might not rather be called survivals. One of the most interesting of such designs given in the Gillows' cost-books is of a table with a fretwork gallery, which, except that the legs bend outwards in the manner known as "turned-out toes," is scarcely distinguishable from Ince. Another survival is the corner chair, which they made in large quantities all through the "Director" period, and of which a specimen similar to the illustration occurs as late as 1787.

The Gillows, in their later work, avoided the Chinese influence, though having a strong leaning to the "Gothic," which would tend to show that
their productions were not entirely dependent on
the popular taste of the moment. There is, indeed,
the evidence of a strong personality, usually leaning
to artistic restraint. This is all the more remark-
able when we remember that much of Robert
Adam’s later and more gorgeous work was executed
by them, and we should expect to find his influence
paramount.

Though the Gillows did not, to quote a phrase
from a well-known writer on other matters, “arro-
gate to themselves a personality,” they showed
their pride in the work they produced by stamping
most of it with the name of the firm. If all other
makers had been careful to do the same, the furni-
ture of the eighteenth century would not only have
been rendered more interesting, as including more
of the personal element, but its study would have
been vastly easier than it now is.

The Gillows were one of the few firms of furni-
ture makers who took a foremost place both in the
eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; and it is
unfortunate, though easily understood, that their
name should have come to be chiefly connected in
the minds of most people with early and middle
Victorian designs.* If Richard Gillow had thought
it worth his while to publish a book of designs about
the same time as Hepplewhite produced the
“Guide,” there might well be two opinions as to
whose name we should now use in describing the
style.

* It need hardly be said that, at the present day, the firm is no longer in the
Victorian era of household decoration.
CHAPTER XVI.

SHEARER.

The consciousness of ignorance which comes from knowledge is proverbial, and a study of the works of the English furniture designers towards the close of the eighteenth century forms no exception to the rule; every modicum of added knowledge seems to increase the difficulty in assigning any piece of actual furniture to one or other of even the best-known names. There are points of difference certainly, but they are by no means so marked or so invariable as would seem to have been generally supposed; and, though it is probably easier to date accurately a piece of furniture made in the nineties than a similar piece constructed in the fifties or sixties, it is much more difficult to feel any certainty in suggesting the name of its designer. One of the least understood of the later furniture makers is Shearer, who, in 1788, published the "Cabinet Makers' London Book of Prices," or rather was chiefly responsible for it, as the book is printed by W. Brown and A. O'Neil "For the London Society of Cabinet Makers." His designs not only resemble the work of his contemporary, Hepplewhite, but very often have quite as strong
an affinity to Sheraton's of some years later, with the result that, though he possessed strong originality, his work is usually ascribed to the better-known men, just as at one time their names were lost in that of Chippendale.

The professed intention of Hepplewhite's "Guide" is to give designs of the furniture in actual use at the time of its publication; that of the Society of Cabinet Makers was to avoid the disputes apt to arise between master and man when piece-work, and not time, was the basis of payment. Both books therefore dealt with many articles in common use, and there is often but little attempt to differentiate them from the designs of others.

There were several editions of the "Book of Prices," one being published as late as 1825, but Shearer's work appears only in the first two editions, issued in 1788 and 1793 respectively. After that the succeeding publications were adapted to the furniture of their own time, and resemble the earlier editions only in name.

The book was largely accepted by the trade, not only in London but also in the provinces, where it was known as "The London Book," and many men still alive can remember the later editions being used in the workshops. The greater part of it is taken up by estimates of the working cost of the pieces described, with carefully prepared tables for such things as veneering, moulding, panelling, etc., nearly everything in fact except the higher branches of decoration. There is no mention of the price of wood or materials, with
which the workmen had nothing to do, so the lists as they stand show only the cost of the actual workmanship required for each article, without such items as carving, brass-work, or decorative painting. Nearly all the plates in the book are signed, with the exception of the frontispiece, which is distinctly the worst, and certainly did not emanate from Shearer. A woman in classic dress is leaning against a pillar, holding in one hand what appears to be a fasces, and in the other an open book showing a design. A snake is coiled round the pillar, while a winged cupid with square and compasses under his arm is presenting her with a scroll on which is inscribed "Unanimity with Justice," to which she appears to be paying as little attention as to the dangerous proximity of the snake. The lady is probably intended to represent an employer of labour, and the cupid the authors of the book. It is a somewhat weird production; but in one way it is as true to its time as the rest of the plates, for the knowledge of classical lore, or the assumption of it, was then so common as to be almost a necessity.

On the title-page the authors state that, as their book is intended to be a guide towards the price of executing any piece of work, "they have no plates of the more common work, that being what almost anyone may settle without the assistance of a drawing." It may possibly be for this reason that no chairs are given, for, if they had been, the prices would have referred only to their construction without carving or decoration. The omission is to be regretted, for if Shearer's
chairs were of the same class of design as the rest of his furniture the loss is very great indeed.

Though the book was intended for the use of the trade, it is evident that the authors also catered for the general public. A few of the designs are not even mentioned in the letterpress, and, with the exception of the tables for inlay, none of the decoration. Great care has evidently been bestowed on the drawings, in most of which there is a marked retention of power coupled with a simplicity of line and such well-considered proportion as can only be matched elsewhere in the more restrained work of Sheraton.

Shearer, however, had his limits, and they are strongly marked. No contemporary designer, not even Sheraton at his best, can be held to have surpassed him in the combination of daintiness and simplicity; but he was far behind both Sheraton and Hepplewhite in the application of the more florid form of ornament. What he possibly may have considered his chef d'œuvre is a sideboard,* the first of its kind (so far as dated designs go) to be really a sideboard and not a sideboard-table with drawers introduced. It may or may not have been the first attempt to combine a sideboard-table and the pedestals and vases which went with it into one article, but it is certainly first as regards date of publication. Its interest, however, is more historical than artistic. It effectually disposes of the idea that we owe the sideboard proper to Sheraton; but it is one of the least convincing of Shearer's designs, neither the decora-

* Page 223.
tion nor the construction being altogether pleasing. The pedestals, which do not quite reach the ground, are supported on feet which are not harmonious with the rest of the treatment, and neither of the alternative designs for vases is at all comparable to Hepplewhite's beautiful renderings of the same articles.

In bookcases Shearer is very strong. His eye for proportion is indisputable, and it is only his occasionally uncertain use of inlay and ornament which would prevent us placing him first in this particular department among later designers. Even as these stand they are better than Hepplewhite's, and there can be little doubt of their influence on Sheraton. The specimen reproduced from the book combines both his best and his worst qualities. Neither treatment of the circular form of inlay can be commended, though as regards the rest there is little to find fault with and much to be admired. The two designs for the pediment give the drawing a lop-sided look, but both are really good; while the four variations for the tracery of the door are all more or less happy. This last was a department of cabinet-making to which Shearer paid particular attention, and he would seem to have been responsible for the style of treatment. There is nothing quite like them in the "Guide," but it is certain that they more than suggested some of the designs given by Sheraton four years later. That marked No. 2 is almost exactly reproduced in No. 1, plate 29, of the "Drawing Book," the only difference of any importance being that the pointed ornament in the centre of the top division
was changed for something much heavier. In this instance there can be no doubt as to the priority of design, but the same cannot be said for several of these by W. Casement in the second edition. They bear the same date as Sheraton's earliest, and the likeness between them is too marked to be the result of mere coincidence. Sheraton, with all the fuss he made about originality, was by no means above annexing anything which happened to suit his purpose; but in this case the likelihood is all the other way. For one thing, Sheraton mentions the first edition of the "Book of Prices" in his preface, but not the second (in which Casement's drawings appear), and for another, his additional eight designs, dated September of the following year, have no such definite resemblance; though, on the other hand, it must be admitted that, with one or two exceptions, they are neither up to his own standard or Casement's. The illustration of a secretaire bookcase from a specimen shown at the Bradford Exhibition is very distinctive of Shearer's style.

Several of the plates by Shearer resemble similar articles illustrated in the "Guide," and in the second edition of the "Book of Prices," many of the added plates bear the signature "Hepplewhite," from which it has been argued that Shearer may have had something to do with the compilation of the "Guide." A careful comparison of the drawings does not lead to this conclusion, for even where the likeness is most apparent, and the articles are precisely similar in construction (as happens more than once), Hepplewhite's render-
Secrétaire Bookcase. In the style of Shearer.
ing of such a thing as a leg of a table is heavy and lacking in grace when compared to Shearer's. It is, nevertheless, worthy of remark that Shearer himself supplied nothing new for the second edition of the "Book of Prices," and that several of the plates signed "Hepplewhite" resemble his style much more closely than anything in the "Guide," being, indeed, indistinguishable from his work both as regards their excellences and their faults.

We know, through the research of Miss Constance Simon, that George Hepplewhite, who was probably the founder of the firm of that name, died a year previous to the publication of the "Guide," and the business was thereafter carried on by his widow Alice under the style of A. Hepplewhite & Co. It is of course possible that in 1792, the date on the earliest of the new plates, Shearer had become a member of the firm, and had therefore sunk his personality; but in the few added plates in the succeeding editions of the "Guide" there is no resemblance to his style, and it is just as likely that when a second edition of the "Book of Prices" was contemplated the better-known firm either took it in hand or allowed their name to be used.

One piece of furniture which is given by no one but Shearer is a lady's screen writing-table.* It is a relic of the pre-tennis-and-hockey days, when complexions were jealously guarded indoors as well as out. These screens were made very light, being only six inches deep, to facilitate their being moved from one part of the room to another. On the lower half were two panelled doors with shelves

* "English Furniture Designers of the Eighteenth Century" (A. H. Bullen).
inside, and the upper part of the front was let down and supported by "quadrants" to form a writing-table, disclosing when in position a nest of drawers and pigeon-holes. They were raised from the ground on light standards, presumably to allow the feet of the lady who used one to benefit by the fire from which her face had to be eternally shielded.

The man who wishes to furnish a house entirely in eighteenth century furniture will find some difficulty in fitting the wash-stands of the period to modern requirements. There are six of these in the "Book of Prices," all of them more suggestive of a doll's-house than of a real bedroom, though apart from their intended use they are nice enough.
articles of furniture. With writing-tables, on the other hand, the choice is almost unlimited, many of them being not only more decorative than our own, but quite as useful. Letter-writing was a very different thing then from what it is now. People did not dash off elliptical sentences on a post-card in a hand-writing intended to baffle the curiosity of the letter carrier; nor did they, as everyone knows who has gone through the contents of an old house, throw a letter in the fire the moment it was answered. Letter-writing was one of the polite arts, and everyone pretending to education or culture emulated the best models. Horace Walpole wrote careful notes of his intended replies on the back of his friends' letters, and even the ordinary correspondent made as careful a skeleton of the subject-matter of a proposed letter as if it were a school essay. Each sheet of paper being its own envelope, the length of a letter and the relative importance of each point had to be as carefully considered as if one were writing an exact column for a newspaper. Every man was not a Horace Walpole, nor every woman a Lady Mary Wortley-Montagu, but most people with a real place in society at least pretended to cultivate the art, with the result that we have received an inheritance of an immense number of beautifully designed and perfectly fitted writing-tables or other articles adaptable to the purpose. In this book alone there are no less than sixteen examples, and in addition four separate drawings for alternative fittings.

One of these (the first plate signed "Heppe-
white”) bears less resemblance to Shearer than most of the others, and though of little artistic merit is of interest as being, presumably, the first of the “Carlton” shape, afterwards improved by Sheraton and other makers. In these a superstructure of drawers ten or twelve inches wide runs round the back and both sides, leaving a space in the middle for a rising writing-desk.

Both Shearer and Hepplewhite, though for different reasons, inserted plates in their books which had no claim to originality. The Rudd’s dressing-table, given by both, owes its origin to an unknown designer, having been first constructed, as we are told in the “Guide,” for “a once popular
character" of that name. It is by no means a thing of beauty, being more remarkable for its ingenuity than for its appearance. The slightly different renderings of this article by Shearer and Hepplewhite are typical of their methods. Shearer's is severely plain; and though Hepplewhite, as in most of his bedroom furniture, makes but little attempt at decoration, the drawing in the "Guide" is of a much heavier and clumsier article.

Shearer supports it on "Marlboro" legs, that is, legs of a square tapered shape ending in a "spade" foot; Hepplewhite more than doubles their thickness, representing legs strong enough, constructively, for the heaviest dining-table of that convivial period, and which seem somewhat out of place for the weight they support.

Hepplewhite furniture taken as a whole is undoubtedly a revolt against the heaviness of the Chippendale period. Sometimes he even leans to fragility, and it has been usual to consider him the prime mover in the evolution to lightness. As regards some of his furniture, particularly that which is intended for the drawing-room, there is a certain amount of justification for the contention; at least, with such facts as are at our disposal, it cannot be absolutely denied. It is, however, possible, if indeed it is not likely, that the leadership of this evolution has been assigned to him simply for lack of other evidence. The "Book of Prices" is the only publication of the kind contemporary with the first edition of the "Guide," and Shearer's avoidance of the drawing-room is as remarkable as his omission of chairs; but where-
Horse-shoe Dining-table.
ever it is possible to compare his designs with those of the "Guide" we invariably find an added lightness and grace. For purposes of comparison I illustrate two sideboards on almost identical lines* which explain the difference between the men in this particular better than can be done in words. From these it will be seen that it is Shearer rather than Hepplewhite who must be considered as the chief apostle of lightness; for he took it to the extreme verge of safety. In the Hepplewhite sideboard an appearance of lightness has evidently been aimed at in the two middle legs in a manner only found in his designs. These are not tapering squares as in Shearer's, but irregular parallelograms. Viewed from across a room, and not in the sudden perspective he affected in his drawings, the depth would not be noticeable, and they would appear to the eye as being considerably less massive than they really are, though even then by no means so light as Shearer's. Whether the extreme of fragility should be praised or blamed is a question that is open to argument; but, after all, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and Shearer's furniture has so far stood the test of time. His reputation, nevertheless, has gained little by the fact. Actual pieces, made by him or from his designs, are almost invariably ascribed to either Hepplewhite or Sheraton, while in a recently published book several illustrations, taken straight from the "Book of Prices," are attributed to the latter designer.

A curious and somewhat rare form of dining

* Pages 225 and 227.
table is that called by Shearer the "horse shoe," which is on the same lines as Gillows' sideboard-table. This was afterwards adopted by Sheraton, who designated it "Grecian," probably from his treatment of the legs and also of the seats with which he surrounded it. It was made to extend to a half circle, as shown on the diagram, the guests sitting round the outer circumference and being served from the inner.

Whether Shearer influenced Hepplewhite or Hepplewhite Shearer is a question to which we are not likely to find a definite answer; yet as a considerable portion of Sheraton's style was founded on Shearer's lines, the presumption is that if a man of such very decided personality was affected, Hepplewhite was no less indebted to this great but practically forgotten designer.
CHAPTER XVII.

FURNITURE DECORATORS.

Several of the publications of the Chippendale period are interesting rather from the bearing they have on the furniture history of the time than from artistic merit. Chief among these is a book by William Halfpenny, entitled "New Designs for Chinese Temples, Triumphal Arches, Garden Seats, etc." This was published in 1750; that is, four years before Chippendale's "Director," and also prior to the time when Sir William Chambers settled in London. The introduction of "the Chinese taste" is, nevertheless, continually ascribed to one or other of these men, who had certainly nothing to do with its inception, so far, at least, as publication is concerned. Actual Chinese pieces had been imported into England in the latter half of the seventeenth century, and though it is difficult to fix even the approximate date when English furniture design began to be affected, it is certain that it was considerably before even Halfpenny's publication. He does not, like Chambers, make any misleading claim to innovation, but, on the contrary, distinctly states that the Chinese style had already been used "with success."
FURNITURE DECORATORS.

Chambers, therefore, could have had nothing to do with the introduction of Chinese design; and though it is possible that Chippendale may have been the first culprit so far as actual manufacture is concerned, it is extremely unlikely. He troubled himself neither with invention nor the search for new influences, being content to take what lay to his hand, and, in his own words, "refine and improve" what other designers had already made fashionable.

It was probably to Halfpenny's book and another (equally open to criticism) published by Edwards and Darly in 1754, that Chambers alluded when he spoke of "the extravagances that daily appear under the name of Chinese." "Most of them," he continues, "are mere inventions, and the rest copies from the lame representations found on porcelain and paperhangings."

Even the advent of Robert Adam did nothing to stop the Chinese craze, and some of the most virulent examples were published by Crunden in 1765, and again in 1770. These are absolutely without value from any point of view, and a third book by the same author (1776), in which he had the assistance of Columbani, Overton, and Milton, is little better. From his titles to his designs, everything connected with his books is merely laughable. High-flown titles for such publications were a fashion of the time, but no one attained the point of bathos touched by Crunden when he christened his first book "The Joyner and Cabinet-Maker's Darling."

Matthias Darly—not the one who collaborated
with Edwards, but Chippendale's principal engraver—published a book of his own, mostly architectural, in 1770. A considerable part of this bears a very strong resemblance to the plates he engraved for Chippendale; indeed, it requires an actual comparison of the books to be certain that Chippendale's plates of the five orders of architecture have not been reprinted. The chimney-pieces are also so exceedingly similar as to make it likely that those in the "Director" were designed as well as engraved by Darly. He gives several pages of urns and vases, all of them being heavy and clumsy in style—the very acme of the useless combined with the unornamental. He is somewhat happier in his mirror frames, in which he attempts, though vainly, to follow Robert Adam. The book is well engraved, for Darly executed the plates himself, but it is a wearisome production, with little else to recommend it to notice.

Another designer of the time who, following in his father's footsteps, adapted himself to the newer feeling, was Thomas Chippendale the younger. George Smith, "Upholsterer to His Majesty," writing of him in 1826, says, "Mr. Thomas Chippendale (lately deceased) though possessing a great degree of taste and ability as a draughtsman and designer, was known only to a few." The exact date of his death, as has been discovered by Miss Constance Simon, was 1823, and he was probably born about 1750, as, again quoting Miss Simon, his father, or another man of the name, was married in 1748.

We are indebted to the same author for the
information that both Thomas Chippendale and his son were members of the Society of Arts, and to Mr. Graves for the knowledge that the younger man, despite his connection with the rival institution, had pictures hung from time to time by the Royal Academy. Of these there seems unfortunately to be no trace, but their titles would suggest that he was influenced by George Morland, who, though only twenty-one at the date of the first of these exhibits (1784), had already come to the front.

The "London Directory" of the eighteenth century is excessively incomplete, and in most cases there is but little to be learnt from it. As negative evidence it is valueless, for it seems to have been looked on, both by its producers and the firms mentioned in it, as a means of advertisement rather than a complete and exhaustive directory. Very few of the cabinet-makers thought it necessary for their names to appear at all, and then chiefly in the closing years of the century. The author of the "Director" never used it, though a certain John Chippindale, cooper (who later spells his name "Chippingdale"), does so from 1760. It is possible that he may have been a connection of the furniture maker's, especially as he seems to have taken a partner into his business in the same year (1779), which is also the year of the great Thomas Chippendale's death. The St. Martin's Lane firm were equally careless how their names were spelt, the first mention of them being as "Chippindale and Hage," mistakes which they did not trouble to correct till 1785, when for a few years the junior
partner became head of the business, which is then entered as "Haig and Chippendale."

Though the approximate time of the last Chippendale’s death has always been common knowledge, there is a widespread idea that the difference in style between the first and third editions of the “Director” arose from the introduction of designs by Thomas Chippendale’s son or sons. There is no impossibility as regards dates that this may have been the case, for the marriage discovered by Miss Simon may either be that of someone else or not a first marriage. The differences in style, however, are directly traceable to the influence of Johnson and the employment of fresh engravers, whose individualities show so plainly that the latitude allowed to them is evident.

Another argument against the supposition, which I have myself expressed, is founded on the more retiring nature of the son and his avoidance of advertising himself by publication. That he did not produce a book at all comparable to the “Director” may be looked on as certain, for such a book, with such a name attached, could hardly have been lost. There has, however, lately come into my hands a small publication by him containing eight original etchings, each plate being signed “T. Chippendale Junr. inv. et ex.,” and dated 1779. From these it is at least evident that his reason for not appearing before the public in a more pretentious way was not lack of artistic ability. The etchings are by no means supreme either in design or execution, but they are much the best of the original plates produced by any of the furniture
From an original plate by "T. Chippendale, Junr."
designers of the time, with the possible exception of some by Pergolesi. Unfortunately, they are devoted entirely to ornament; yet they are interesting not only in themselves, but as showing the change which had taken place in the work of the firm. The author of the "Director" was still alive at the date of this publication, though there is some reason for supposing that he had by that time retired from the management of the business, if not from all connection with it. The change, however, was probably quite as much due to the father as the son, for the great Chippendale was an absolute chameleon, taking colour from all his surroundings, whether bad or good.

If Robert Adam's chief idea had been to influence the whole of English furniture he could not have hit on a better plan than that he adopted. Had he started a workshop, or, as in the case of his patent stucco, employed a crowd of workmen of his own, he would have met with considerable opposition from the trade. It would not have affected either his position or his income; nor was he the man who cared the snuff of a candle for personal enmity (of which he had his full share), but, probably because his hands were sufficiently full already, he left the manufacture of furniture to the men whose business it was. Not only were the pieces he designed put in the hands of the existing cabinet-makers, but in several notable instances—Claydon House, for example—he appears to have left them a free hand. That Chippendale and Gillow worked for him or with him is a matter of history, and that Lock also did so is, in my
opinion, capable of proof, while Johnson and probably also several other carvers of the time appear to have been employed.

In one single instance, where Adam was architect, Chippendale's bill for furniture ran to about eighteen

From an original plate by "T. Chippendale, Junr."

hundred pounds. There was every reason, therefore, for adopting Adam's style, and very little for the expensive advertisement of books such as the "Director." With the exception of Adam's own publication nothing else of any real importance appeared between 1765 and 1787. The old style, as we have already seen, still existed, becoming
gradually modified by the fresh influence; but it is only from the relics of the furniture actually constructed that we can form any estimate of its prevalence. As far as can be shown, the Chippendales at least had very little to do with keeping it alive, and "the newest taste" appears to have been the text of the son as much as it had been of the father.

The pamphlet mentioned is utterly unlike anything we know as "Chippendale," bearing throughout a strong resemblance to Robert Adam, and a stronger still to Pergolesi. Regarded merely as etchings the designs are superior to Lock's, but wanting in the restraint which Lock so admirably copied from Robert Adam. The Italians of the time seemed unable to leave well alone, and few of the English copyists succeeded in grasping the dignity of Adam's translations. Among these the last Chippendale cannot be ranked. His designs are pleasing enough in general construction, but he insists on carrying them too far. Just as the flamboyance of Johnson attracted his father, so he was affected by the too intricate treatment of Pergolesi. Nor is there anything which can be called new in his ornament. The ram's head, the urn, the fan, the medallion, and the honeysuckle are extensively used, as also the griffin and the sphinx. To the latter he gives a whole plate, besides using it as a supporter. It is not, of course, the Sphinx of Gizeh, but is taken, like those of Robert Adam and other designers up to Sheraton, from the Greek imitation—the female sphinx who propounded the famous conundrum, and killed herself, in a fit of temper, when it was solved. Though these are the
only etchings which have come to light, the executive skill they display proves that they were not maiden efforts. The designs have not been transferred to the ground, but drawn directly on it with the needle, for the middle line he used as a guide in getting both sides alike shows on the prints. They are, for the most part, pleasantly composed, with considerable artistic feeling and knowledge of draughtsmanship. The form, too, is frequently cleverly suggested instead of being made out in the hard and fast manner of Lock and his contemporaries, and the figures, particularly some of the more sketchy among them, are effective and dainty. There is, in fact, artistic power but no attempt at originality. If one might guess the branch of cabinet-making he worked at personally, the likelihood would seem to be that while his father’s tool was the chisel his was the brush.

It is quite possible that this small book may have been published in emulation of Pergolesi, who two years previously had begun issuing in parts a volume of what purport to be original plates. Pergolesi was one of the crowd of foreign artists who flocked to London during the fifties and sixties when we were just beginning to have a real national art of our own. The reception given to many of these is now almost unbelievable. Cipriani was considered the best historical painter, and several of the others were original members of the Royal Academy. That their influence on the English Renaissance was no greater is little short of miraculous, for they had, one and all, that soul-destroying facility so captivating to the young worker.
As artists they barely merit serious consideration, but as furniture and mural decorators they were exactly in their right places, and it was in these walks of art that they were greatly engaged, Sir W. Chambers and Robert Adam, who employed them, being responsible for the arrival of most of them in England.

Michel Angelo Pergolesi has been credited by some of his admirers with a dexterity in the use of the brush as great as his ease in ornament, but, judging on the evidence of his book, this appears to me to be more than doubtful. This book is folio size, the different parts dating from 1777 to shortly after the death of his patron, Robert Adam. His dedication is almost as grandiloquent as his wrongly-spelt name: "To the Memory of the late most High and Puissant Prince, Hugh Percy, Duke of Northumberland, who was a Patron of the Arts, and to Whose Virtues This work is Dedicated by His most Grateful and humble Servant Michel Angelo Pergolesi."

The publication line engraved on his plates is as curiously wrong in manner as in fact: "Pergolesi Del¹ Scul¹ et Publish'd according to act of Parliament the 1 of May 1777." That some of the etchings—many of them, in fact—were executed by himself is extremely likely, but a large proportion are evidently by several different men. Most of the plates contain ten or more different designs, in placing which, so as to make a pleasing whole, he displays considerable skill and judgment.

In some of the later numbers there is a central panel such as that illustrated, drawn by Cipriani
Plate from the Book by Pergolesi.
and engraved by Bartolozzi; yet though their names are engraved on each side of it in the usual manner, Pergolesi makes no alteration in his publication line for the whole plate. There are other similar plates in the earlier part of the book which seem to have given rise to the idea that he himself could treat a figure panel in this manner; but not only is the majority of the figure-work which may be ascribed to him immensely inferior to that of his greater compatriots, but the unacknowledged plates in this style are evidently also by them.

Pergolesi must have been immensely useful to Robert Adam as a draughtsman, for it is evident that he had the whole work of the school from which Adam took his ornament at his finger ends, and where he restrained his too exuberant curves and flourishes, it is difficult to discriminate between them, more particularly as a large number of Adam's acknowledged designs were probably by him. When, however, we come to furniture there can be no such confusion. The page illustrated is a fair sample of Pergolesi's ornament, but his furniture, fortunately for us, resembles nothing else of the period.

By far the most famous decorator of English eighteenth century furniture was the lady artist we know as Angelica Kauffman, whose real names were Marie Anne Angelique Catherine. Some of her biographers must have been, like the gentleman in the Bab Ballads, "shaky in their dates," as they seldom agree. Her first marriage, for instance, is variously said to have taken place in 1768 and 1769; her departure from England in
1780 and 1781, and her death in 1805 and 1807; nor do they even agree as to the time and place of her birth. As, however, none of these occurrences were, like Robert Adam's return from Italy, epoch-making in the history of English furniture, absolute accuracy is not required so far as present purposes are concerned.

"The fair Angelica," as her English adorers loved to call her, began as an infant prodigy. Her father was a poor Swiss portrait painter, and at the age of nine her earnings were already of considerable importance to her parents, while at eleven she was painting portraits of bishops, archbishops, and dukes. At fifteen, when she was the rage of Rome; she could speak four languages perfectly, and was a finished musician in addition to her other artistic endowments. Even if we accept the earlier date given for her birth and add another two years to the ages given, the facts will still be sufficiently surprising.

She came to England in 1765, and at once became the fashion, both in social and artistic circles. She painted portraits of the King and the Prince of Wales, and became the personal friend of Queen Charlotte. She had proposals of marriage by the score, for she was amiable and beautiful as well as clever, but she paid heed to none of them, having fixed her affections (or possibly her ambition) on Reynolds. Though that confirmed old bachelor saw no reason for changing his condition, he not only found her work, but actually employed her, and the marble chimney-piece illustrated was one of two in his house which were thus treated.
White marble chimney-pieces had only just come into fashion, and were considered very grand indeed. Goldsmith makes one of his characters say, "I have often seen a good sideboard, or a marble chimney-piece, though not actually put in the bill, inflame the bill confoundedly." Our ideas regarding them have changed. The cold white of marble is destructive to colour harmony, and one of our greatest experts on colour furnishing recommended giving them a coat of paint. Reynolds evidently felt something of this, but, not being quite so revolutionary in his ideas, endeavoured to make them suit their surroundings by having them decorated by the fair Angelica.

It is probably a mistake to suppose that Angelica Kauffman was included as an original member of the Royal Academy through Reynolds's influence; it is, in fact, much more likely that she had a good deal to do with the actual grant of the Charter. Whatever the Academy may or may not have done to justify its existence, nothing can be more certain than that it was founded on pique and came into being through back-stairs intrigue. Angelica had the Queen's ear, and her influence with royalty could only have been second to that of Sir William Chambers, the royal drawing-master.

The re-introduction of painted decoration into English furniture may be accounted for in more ways than one, but it is by no means improbable that the vogue attained by this lady artist had much to do with its general adoption. Robert Adam has left a design for an organ, dated in the early sixties, in which painted panels formed part
of the decoration; but musical instruments, to a very great extent, followed a line of evolution of their own, and so far as his drawings in the Soane

Commode decorated in the style of Angelica Kauffman. From Sir Walter Gilbey's Collection.

Museum show, he did not again employ this method till 1770. It was not for want of artists capable of executing the work that this means was not resorted
to, for Cipriani had come to London three years before Adam returned from Italy. Angelica certainly belonged to the rival artistic faction, but so did his own assistant Zucchi, and, moreover, he had probably met her in Rome as well as London.

Be that as it may, it is at least certain that it was not till some years after Angelica Kauffman had attained to eminence in England that painted furniture became the fashion. The commode illustrated is an instance of how the chisel was rapidly being forsaken for the brush.

Up to the time of her inclusion in the Royal Academy Angelica’s history had been a series of unbroken successes; after that she made the fatal mistake which ruined her life. The footman whom she married under the impression that he was of noble birth was pensioned off on the condition of his leaving England; but Angelica felt the blow to her pride so severely that, for the rest of her stay in this country, she never again appeared in society. Her work continued to be much sought after, and she must have amassed a considerable fortune; the ceiling of the Council-room of the Royal Academy was decorated by her, and Boydell published nearly sixty plates from her paintings.

There is nothing distinctive in her style, and much is attributed to her on which it would be difficult to pass an opinion without an amount of study which the subject does not deserve. It is worthy of remark, however, that when in 1780 (or 1781) her husband died and she married Zucchi, she left for Rome never again to return to England. Yet
though this throws considerable doubt on the later work attributed to her, it does not absolutely prove that such pieces are not authentic.

Poor Angelica's second marriage was even more disastrous than the first, for Zucchi seems to have taken to gambling or speculation, and dissipated her fortune as well as his own. Nor was her second visit to Rome a success. Her former reception in what was then the art capital of the world was probably quite as much due to her marvellous precocity as to her art, and the woman of forty seems to have come very near starvation where the child made a large income. Under these circumstances it would have been strange if such a good business woman had not used her English connection. In matters artistic Rome was nearer London in the end of the eighteenth century than it is now, and the mere fact that an art object of any kind came from the Eternal City gave it value in the eyes of the ordinary English collector. There is, therefore, every likelihood, especially towards the end of the century, when her circumstances had gone from bad to worse, that she made use of the only market where her work was still in demand, and that many of the later painted decorations on which doubt has recently been thrown are perfectly authentic.
CHAPTER XVIII
THE HEPPLEWHITE PERIOD.

In some respects, the book published by A. Hepplewhite & Co. which they entitled "The Cabinet-maker and Upholsterer’s Guide," has many points in common with Chippendale’s "Director." There is certainly not much similarity between the designs, for the fundamental idea of the Hepplewhite School was to combine lightness with elegance. This was more or less a revolt against what they considered to be the over-heaviness of Chippendale and his immediate successors, though it is chiefly apparent in lighter articles of furniture. Beds, bureaux, bookcases, etc., show but little change as far as regards construction, the chief difference between the two schools in such pieces lying more in the minutiae of ornament than in primary intention.

The authors of the "Guide," while claiming also to work on behalf of the English provinces and London itself, make a very strong point of lucidly explaining their ideas to foreigners; "English taste and workmanship," they tell us, "have of late been much sought for by surrounding nations, and the mutability of all things, but more especially fashion, has rendered the labours of our predecessors
in this line of little use; nay, at this day, they can only tend to mislead those foreigners who seek a knowledge of English taste in the various articles of household furniture."

This was manifestly true as regards Chippendale, Ince and Mayhew, Manwaring, and the other designers who published furniture books in the fifties and sixties, but it was also almost to as great an extent the case with the contemporaneous issues of the brothers Adam, whose style, though influencing everyone, Hepplewhite and Sheraton included, cannot be held to represent, with any degree of truth, the furniture art of the country at large.

It is especially worthy of note, looked at from this standpoint, that in the preface of the "Guide" there is no claim made to originality, but rather the reverse. The drawings, we are told, are all new, but eccentricity of any kind has been purposely avoided, and, more than that, while they have "designedly followed the latest or most prevailing fashion" they have "steadily adhered to such articles only as are of general use and service."

From this it will be seen that the claim and intention of the book, as expounded in its preface, is to be an accurate illustrated catalogue of the artistic feeling of the workers of the time in furniture, rather than of the individual taste of any one man or set of men.

Books of contemporary furniture design were, at the time of Hepplewhite's publication, only represented by the successive volumes issued by
the brothers Adam. The contrast between these and the "Guide" is so striking that, despite the evident and declared intention, several admirers of Hepplewhite have seemingly fallen into the error of supposing that the style, thus given to the public, was both distinctive and original. This cannot be said to be borne out by the facts at our command. It is abundantly evident, both from actual pieces of furniture and from unpublished records, that many, possibly, indeed, all of the best craftsmen of the period, were working in what is now known as Hepplewhite design several years before the publication of the "Guide."

A. Hepplewhite & Co., therefore, though they may have originated many of the striking departures in design connected with their name in everyone's mind, did not attempt, and, as a matter of fact, did not achieve anything strikingly new in their book.

The drawings are "new," but, in many cases, the design of the article illustrated was common property, and they not only make no attempt to hide the fact, but force it on the reader's consideration.

The most marked instance of this has already been mentioned. Plate 79, of the third edition, represents a "Rudd's" dressing table, which they tell us in the text was reported to have been invented for a once popular character of that name.

No one can compare this book with Shearer's without being struck by the wonderful resemblance, not only in construction but in style—
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a resemblance so great, that in many instances it is exceedingly difficult to discriminate between them. Nor is the "Rudd's" table the only instance of the same article being illustrated in both books with only slight variations. Plate 29 in the "Guide" and plate 5 in Shearer's second edition are, to all intents and purposes (even down to some of the decoration), the same piece of furniture.

There was no trade rivalry between the authors, for in the third edition of the "Book of Prices" there are six plates by Hepplewhite. It is possible, therefore, that, considering the slightly later date of Shearer's book, some of his designs may have been frankly taken from or inspired by the "Guide." On the other hand, this is not only uncertain but unlikely; the more obvious explanation being that both men were working with one purpose.

While I am far from denying either the distinctiveness or the originality of much of the work in the "Guide," I cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that there is probably nothing absolutely new in construction, and that any claim to originality depends on the elegance and taste with which the decorations are treated. This is very much what might be said of the "Director," but in Chippendale's work there is vastly more difference between it and contemporary design.

Almost nothing is known about most of the eighteenth century furniture designers, and in this case even the name of the firm does not occur elsewhere than on their own title-page. Sheraton, in his mention of the book, speaks of it as by
"Heppelwhite,* while in his list of master cabinet-makers in and around London in 1803, the name does not appear. From this and other facts, it has been argued not only that there was no such firm, but that there was no designer of the name, the book being the joint production of two or more of the cabinet-makers of the time, who used the signature as a non-de-plume.

With only the book to judge from, such a contention would be by no means impossible, for it is only too evident that the designs are not all by one, nor even by two men. Hepplewhite, however, had an absolute existence, as I learn from Messrs. Gillows that he was apprenticed at their Lancaster house, and Miss Constance Simon has proved the existence of the London firm bearing the name. George Hepplewhite, probably the founder of the business, died in 1786 (a year before the date of the earliest engravings in the book), and "A. Hepplewhite & Co." was the designation adopted by his widow, Alice, and her partners.

One point in which the "Guide" is in sharp contrast to the "Director" is that Chippendale's book was produced in his last and worst phase, whereas Hepplewhite was fortunate enough to choose a time for publishing his designs when the style he affected had been, both by himself and others, worked up to its highest point of perfection.

Neither Hepplewhite nor anyone else ever, at a first attempt, evolved a chair from his inner

* Sheraton's book was published before Hepplewhite's third edition, in which, as in the plates done in conjunction with Shearer, the spelling of the name was changed.
Chair showing French influence.
consciousness as good as the best of the shield backs. In them, as in everything else that approaches perfection, the growth was gradual, and had its origin in something totally different.

Through the most of English eighteenth century furniture and much that went before it, however divergent chairs might be in design, they almost invariably had one thing in common: in that the splat, or central part of the back, formed a direct junction between the top and back rails. The first exceptions of any importance were the "French" chairs of Chippendale's time, and it is undoubtedly owing to the same influence that the upright splat went more or less out of fashion shortly after 1770. I illustrate a chair, evidently of English make and partly of English design, which not only shows this influence very clearly but also the way in which French ideas were made use of by English cabinet-makers somewhere about 1775: the back is purely French in general shape, but the tapering front legs have something which resembles the spade foot of a few years later. Chairs of this kind were made in large quantities in England, and seem to have influenced the whole construction of the period.

It is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules, but, roughly speaking, the tendency of the Chippendale period, as regards the top rail of a chair, was to follow the line of a Cupid's bow with upturned ends; that of the Hepplewhite to the curved or almost circular; while Sheraton delighted in straight lines. There are numerous exceptions to each of these forms, though, being true in the great
Chair combining Chippendale and Hepplewhite influences.
majority of instances, they may be looked upon as useful generalities.

My second illustration is another early form of Hepplewhite design, and shows the succeeding step in the evolution of the shield back; in this, as will be seen, the upright splat was retained, though the wheat-ear pattern would suggest the date of 1780, or even later, for the manufacture of this particular specimen. They were still made in considerable quantities until the end of the century, in spite of the fact that they were one of the least convincing of the designs of the times. When they first came into fashion, they were called "camel-back," from the central rise or hump on the top rail, and often had rounded instead of pointed corners. These did not satisfy the eye of the designers, and the slightly upturned corners were substituted, either as a partial return to the Chippendale line or in direct imitation of the top of a shield. The top rail of this form is practically identical with the shield back proper, as will be seen by reference to my next illustration, which is evidently a variation of a single chair given on plate 5 of the "Guide."

A chair back of this pattern looks immensely more fragile than it really is, which is precisely what the designers of the Hepplewhite School attempted in their revolt from massiveness. By thorough knowledge and careful choice of wood and grain, joined to finished workmanship and the utmost nicety in fitting, these delicate chair backs, which seem almost unsafe to lean against, became
Shield Back Chair. From Sir Walter Gilbey's collection.
one homogeneous piece, immensely stronger than if cut out of the solid.

As already noticed the brothers Adam designed a hall chair with a solid shield-shaped back, bearing a carved coat of arms, and connected to the seat in the same manner as the ordinary Hepplewhite chair of the design. This drawing, however, though very possibly the first of its kind in England, unfortunately bears no date. There were also some early specimens in which the top rail projected beyond the side supports as in a Windsor chair, but the illustrations give the chief links in the chain.

The next illustration shows a somewhat closer adherence to the French original in that the back is oval; another hall chair, by the Adam brothers, dated 1777, gives the same general shape, but without the honeysuckle ornament, which in this case is specially worthy of remark, as it is an old design of Robert Adam's resuscitated. In a sketch, dated 1778, the honeysuckle pattern covers the back of a chair in a similar manner to the illustration, though, being another of his hall chairs, the design is carved on the solid. When, therefore, it occurred to men more conversant with the capabilities of wood to lighten the chair by leaving spaces between the carved parts of the design, all they required to consider were difficulties of an entirely structural kind, that is, unless open-work chair backs of the shield back or oval patterns were made prior to 1778, which is at least doubtful. It is not, however, by any means impossible, as a honeysuckle chair of very much this design was manufactured by the Gillows in 1780.
Honeysuckle Chair, similar to Gillows' designs of 1780.
In this honeysuckle design the difficulties of grain are evidently much greater than in the shield back, the petals are so bent and twisted as to look what Mr. Chucks would have called "precarious and not at all permanent," yet here it is, after more than a century of use, practically as strong as on the day it was made.

I think it, then, extremely likely that the idea of the shield back, which has usually been considered as a sort of Hepplewhite hall mark, had its beginnings with Robert Adam and not with any of the actual manufacturers of the time.

It is not without much careful study that I have come, somewhat reluctantly, to these conclusions. By "Chippendale" I do not mean a period of design, but an actual man; yet I confess my inability, except occasionally in the treatment of ornament, to attach any meaning to "Hepplewhite," other than that of a style, and it is chiefly in this signification that I shall use the name.
CHAPTER XIX.

BEDROOM FURNITURE OF THE HEPPELWHITE PERIOD.

English furniture of the eighteenth century followed, on the whole, a gradual but well-marked line of progress from heaviness to lightness. There were, however, several notable exceptions, among which sideboards will occur to all, and of which the heavy, square chair leg, which came into fashion in the sixties, is another example. It was simple without being light or graceful, and is one of the curious anomalies of the period. The chief articles of furniture which did not follow the general rule belong to the library and the bedroom. In the former, bookcases and tables were left very much as they stood, with a few changes depending on the style of ornament used, or again, only differing by their absolute plainness from the designs of Chippendale. The lack of ornament of any kind in many of Hepplewhite's designs is a very striking feature in his book, and the attention of the reader is called to it in the preface.

Some of the articles which Hepplewhite dignifies with the name of "library tables" are just as ugly and uninteresting as the commonest knee-hole table in the ordinary city office of to-day. It
is probable that it is not so much owing to an attempt at simplicity that we find such objects sandwiched in between others of a highly ornate character, as to the change which had come with the new aims in the capabilities of the workman employed. In Chippendale's time every skilled cabinet-maker was also, of necessity, a carver; in Hepplewhite's, though carving was by no means dead, it became, from the introduction of painting and inlay, a secondary qualification. The painted ornament was not done in the workshop but in the studios of the artists, and, though inlay was still part of the craftsman's work, it was an infinitely easier thing to become proficient in than carving. It needed but little artistic knowledge, and the workman naturally fitted himself to the requirements of his masters, so that this second (and possibly greatest) culminating point of eighteenth century design held within itself seeds which meant artistic ruin.

If any practical result is to be arrived at from the study of eighteenth century furniture apart from mere expert knowledge of what is, unfortunately, ancient history, it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that it is to the bench we must look for lasting improvement, and not to the studio.

It is well that artists should take a living interest in the subject; but the history of English furniture proves that it is dangerous, even partially, to lay aside the chisel for the paint brush. The end of the eighteenth century is a glorious epoch in the annals of our furniture design. There are numerous pieces which, if not unmatched, are certainly
unbeaten by even the best of the Chippendale era, but they teach a terrible lesson in the danger of taking the work out of the hands of the workman. With the exception of Robert Adam, all our best furniture has been designed by practical cabinet-makers, and Adam was unique among our architects in his versatility. When the rage for painted furniture came to a sudden and untimely end, it had just lasted long enough to weed out the artist workman. After that came the deluge. The work had got almost entirely into the hands of painters as regarded its finer qualities, and when they dropped out through the change of fashion, the workmen, from lack of training, were unable to design anything of real excellence.

Carving is not only the most obvious (and possibly the most legitimate) means of decorating furniture—it is the great educational art factor as regards the workman; everything he carves teaches him the subtleties of form, and so fits him, if he is inherently capable of it, for the higher walk of original design.

Exquisite as many of these specimens of decorated furniture are, it is almost impossible to approach the study of them without a certain amount of regret. They may, as many hold, represent the apex of our domestic art—the very summit of the mountain—but on the other side was a yawning and unfathomable chasm. After the first few years of the nineteenth century, art disappeared from our furniture as suddenly and as effectively as the figures on a slate when a wet sponge has been passed over them.
If we did not know where to find the beginnings of the class of furniture which makes the early Victorian period a byword, almost the last place to look for the information would be in the "Guide." Yet here they are, and strangely enough, nowhere else. To apply the word "design" to the library table alluded to would be almost as much a misnomer as to describe by it the map of London, and the same applies to several other articles, such as what Hepplewhite calls "double chests of drawers," but which are usually known as tall boys. Of these Hepplewhite gives drawings for two, one of which is all but absolutely plain, while the other is one of the least convincing designs in the book. In the first, the upper compartment is divided into two drawers of equal size, in the other into three—a long drawer in the middle and two very small ones at the sides, thus carrying out the idea of one chest of drawers being superimposed on another, which is further suggested by what stands for the upper chest being slightly narrower than the lower. What this double chest gains in appearance by the divisions at the top giving variety and lightness, is more than lost by the division of the upper drawer of its lower portion into two. This is both structurally wrong, and most unpleasant to the eye as a disturbing line.

There is but little to be said in favour of these tall boys, even from the consideration of practical usefulness; they certainly had much more room than the ordinary chest of drawers, but their design entailed great difficulties. If the huge, plain surface
BEDROOM FURNITURE.

was to be varied at all, the evident place to attempt it was at the top, for if an exceedingly deep drawer were placed at the bottom, it would give no greater real convenience than the discarded oak chest. The height of the piece is given by Hepplewhite as five feet six inches, so that the smaller drawers—the primary purpose of which is for such of the lesser articles of dress as it is convenient to put one's hand on at once without disturbing the arrangement of their other contents—were all but useless. The average man could only peep in over the top, while a lady would require to stand on a chair.

That these tall boys should have been in such universal use constitutes one of the most curious anomalies in later eighteenth century furniture, for the same people who had the taste to appreciate the delicacy of motif in Hepplewhite's finer designs (than which few things are finer), bought them readily. Hepplewhite could not have been the only producer, for even now they exist in large numbers; but had he been as great as Chippendale, he would have "improved and refined" their design.

One reason why those pieces of furniture—as well as others—became not only plainer but heavier, lay in the changed conditions under which they were called into being. In the time of Chippendale and Ince the bedroom, being also a reception-room, contained movables designed to suit its uses, and, in many instances, these were intended to appear to the eye as something else. This custom had not entirely died out by the end of the century, as will be seen by the wash-hand stand illustrated, but it had gone considerably out of fashion. The
Decorated Commode. From the collection of Mr. Phillips.
Dressing Drawers. From Sir Walter Gilbey's collection.
multum in parvo and the imitation of sitting-room furniture still remained, but the numerous cupboards which the older architects had placed in their thicker walls were rapidly disappearing, and storage room was a necessity. This accounts for the inclusion of tall boys in the "Guide," but it by no means excuses the faults in design.

The wash-hand stand just mentioned is a happier example of the bedroom furniture of the time. It does not suggest Hepplewhite's hand, but, as already explained, I am treating rather of a period than a man. It has the appearance of a kneehole writing-table, but under the lid there is a basin, soap dish, etc., as well as a rising looking-glass. It is typical of its time by being far heavier than the similar contrivances of the Chippendale period, particularly those by Ince, one of whose designs for a lady's dressing table is both lighter and more dainty than any similar piece of folding furniture I am acquainted with which belongs to the end of the century.

The "dressing drawers" reproduced are almost identical with one of the designs on plate lxxvi. of the "Guide," and if compared with Chippendale's "buroe dressing tables"—which are the same thing under a different name—the reversion to heaviness will be apparent. There is not much to criticise in this specimen; it is one of the happy instances where bands of inlay are the only ornamentation, but where grace of line and careful choice of wood are in themselves sufficient. Hepplewhite, when he chose, could make his simple work almost as beautiful and interesting as his more
ornate, though, it must be allowed, he was surpassed in this both by his friend Shearer and his none too polite rival Sheraton.

Another piece of bedroom furniture, again more typical of the time than the man, is the combination between a chest of drawers and a knee-hole escritoire. This not only exemplifies the careful choice of woods, but the style of inlay in use at the date, and is remarkable rather for finished workmanship than for beauty of design.

It must not, however, be thought that all bedroom furniture followed the same lines. That most of it did is certain, but there are many examples where the new doctrine expounded by the rest of the late eighteenth century work also applies. The toilet table and mirror reproduced is chosen for purposes of comparison. No designer of the time gave this combination except Sheraton, and in them he departs from his usual custom and becomes oppressively heavy and ornate.

The wardrobe, though a fine piece, and constructed of well-selected wood, is of even greater interest from the questions it raises than from its own merits. It is absolutely necessary, if one would understand the subject thoroughly, to have much more than merely a passing acquaintance with the furniture books of the period; but "book-learning" of any kind is apt to be valued more by its possessor than anyone else, though a knowledge of the published designs undoubtedly gives a more exact knowledge in many particulars than the mere handling of the articles themselves without having accurate ideas.
of their history. The books published were few, and, for one reason or other, so restricted in scope as to be merely samples even of the work of the men who produced them. Sometimes these samples, as in the "Director" and the "Guide," may be looked on to some degree as a summary of contemporaneous motifs; at others, as in Johnson, a single phase; and again, as in the brothers Adam, a selection showing the leanings of a strong personality. The last is a noteworthy example because, from the high positions held by both brothers, their original drawings were valued and preserved, and we have only to look over the volumes at the Soane Museum to see how partial, and in many cases how unrepresentative, was their choice.

The "Guide" deserves its title as being the best authority of its time with regard to prevailing fashion, but it is necessarily very incomplete. Even had that pitifully poor designer, Johnson, not published, it might have been possible to deduce his existence from Chippendale's third edition, but though Hepplewhite's art was greatly founded on Adam's teaching, if the memory of the great architect were blotted out, it would be impossible from the "Guide" to guess that Hepplewhite lived and worked at the same time as a man of such marked style. In such things as the carved leaf on an urn or "fan" inlay, we get an exact reproduction; but where he leaves ornament and attempts, as in his pier glasses and girandoles, to imitate the feeling of a whole piece, he absolutely fails to catch the spirit. Yet he is, at times,
Dressing-table and Mirror. From Sir Walter Gilbey's collection.
practically indistinguishable from Shearer, and at others from Sheraton. It must, therefore, be remembered, that in taking the "Guide" as a summary of the work of the time, we are not dealing with a man of the receptivity of Chippendale, but one with marked limitations.

If we also remember that, though such plates as the Rudd's dressing table were included, the bulk of the book was necessarily in the latest fashion, there is not much cause for wonder that even such a strong movement as that exemplified by the wardrobe we are considering should be left out. With much that was new there was, in the end of the eighteenth century, a very considerable return to older forms, particularly those which pertained in the sixties, probably because these, from their lightness, were more suited for mixing with the general ideas of the time.

Wardrobes had but little attention paid them in the publications of the time. Shearer had none at all, Sheraton only one, and though Hepplewhite gives four, it is worthy of remark that none have pediments, though he adds them to all but one of his nine bookcases.

If this wardrobe is compared with those on plates 87 and 88 of the "Guide," it will at once be seen that it is one of the many pieces of the eighteenth century which were built up from two or more of the published designs. The chief differences are, that Hepplewhite's are more squat and ungainly in general shape, and that the oval, taken from plate 88, has been similarly treated. Hepplewhite seldom did himself justice as a draughts-
Wardrobe of Hepplewhite period, with "Chippendale" characteristics.
man, and even his finest chairs would be far from possessing the beauty they have, if produced according to the plates. In these wardrobes, however, there can be no mistake, as they are drawn to scale. In the preface, we are told that they should be four feet broad by five feet six inches high "or more." These he has made about six feet nine high, and even then has not attained to grace. It must, I fear, be admitted that at a time when, in bedroom furniture, mere accommodation was put first, and both beauty and the principles of design scarcely considered, Hepplewhite was one of the worst sinners.

The explanation seems to be fairly evident. Even if the title did not suggest more than one designer, the fearful inequality of the plates themselves would make it all but certain that the work was by two or more hands. Hepplewhite, as we know him best, was a man of the drawing-room and boudoir. With few exceptions there is nothing in the furniture of the bedroom which is even recognisable in style, in fact, where we get an article for a reception-room, it is by "Hepplewhite"; when for the bedroom it may usually be attributed to the designer or designers who figure on the title-page as "Co."
CHAPTER XX.

SOME HEPPLEWHITE CHARACTERISTICS.

If we suppose that George Hepplewhite had for some time before his death projected such a book as the "Guide," and collected or prepared a great part of it, it is easy to understand how his widow, who probably knew as little of design as of practical cabinet-making, should include many drawings which a more artistic judgment would have relegated to the wastepaper basket. That there was no designer of any eminence in the Hepplewhite firm after 1787 is fairly evident, for the book differs from every other of its kind in being the only one which reached a third edition in a form practically unchanged. Some of the additions in 1789 are quite worthy of the best of the authors, and, as they coincide with the style of the most pleasing of the decorative work, were most probably done from drawings made some time before, whereas these added in 1794—attempts at the newer style of Sheraton—are without merit. These were probably inserted as an answer to Sheraton's sneer at the style of the book, which, he said, had "caught the decline." As such, or indeed as anything, they are utterly
unconvincing, the best and obvious answer to his ill-tempered criticism was that, even after the "Drawing Book" appeared, the public called for (and bought) a large third edition of the "Guide."

Apart from the fact that much of Sheraton's work very closely resembles Hepplewhite's, it is certain that when he made the remark, the style was far from being moribund. As we have seen, it was comparatively new in 1787, and the immense amount of pieces which are still in existence conclusively prove that it was by no means a passing fashion. The style, like most others of the century, was taken from the French, but whereas Robert Adam, who led the way to the new departure, can often barely be separated from his models, the Hepplewhite school was distinctly English. Adam designed furniture for over thirty years, yet there are comparatively few examples extant, and only scattered specimens of his more purely French designs, which did not appeal to the ordinary Englishman till they were, so to speak, translated into English by the Hepplewhite workers. If we take into account the comparative fragility of the structure in the Hepplewhite period, there was probably more furniture made in this style than in any other of the century, not excepting the Chippendale ball-and-claw epoch. It is, however, by no means certain that the fashion lasted longer, for the wealth of the country had doubled, and buyers of good furniture were to be found among a class who could not have afforded to purchase expensive articles fifty years before.

Among the designs which occur in the first
edition and were afterwards replaced by others, is the oval-backed chair alluded to while speaking of the criticisms on Chippendale's ribbon back pattern; it has, indeed, every fault of construction mentioned by these critics with a few new ones added, for not only is a Prince of Wales' feather substituted for the ribbon in the splat, but, regardless of comfort as of structural correctness, a knot of ribbon which might have come straight out of the third edition of the "Director" is superimposed on the top of the back. There is no denying that with all these faults the chair in question had both grace and distinction, but so had Chippendale's ribbon backs. That this design should have escaped the adverse criticisms of the men who poured withering scorn on Chippen-dale, may possibly be accounted for by its non-appearance in the third edition. When a fault is acknowledged—and it is only fair so to look upon the exclusion—it is ungracious to insist upon it; but A. Hepplewhite & Co., while excising this specimen, retained others every whit as wrongly constructed but without the same claim to beauty.

On plate 8 of the third edition is a chair immensely worse in design, and quite as bad from the point of construction. For sheer madness of conception Chippendale never approached, and even Johnson did not surpass it. The central ornament of the splat is a vase of flowers—not carved in relief on a flat surface, but separate. Two snakes are represented as writhing up this vase, and everything in the design, including even the side supports of the back, twists and twirls in a confused and
utterly unsatisfying manner, so that in this instance, though there is neither feather nor ribbon, we have not only flowers, but leaves and drapery. Hepplewhite’s use of drapery, which he hangs in festoons or allows to drop by the side like the end of a curtain, is surely as constructively wrong as the employment of ribbon for the same purpose. The fact is, that none of these men looked at design from a scientific point of view, and it is unfair to lay too much stress on what were universal faults of the time, and which, perhaps, though we now consider them wrong, may very possibly be looked at with more lenient eyes by our successors in criticism.

I cannot, however, avoid pointing out that, while Chippendale has met with a storm of abuse there is an absolute chorus of satisfaction when Hepplewhite’s works have been considered. If blindness is inexcusable in a critic, what shall be said for the partial blindness which sometimes distorts and at others sees everything rose colour?

It is an easy and, indeed, a thankless task to find fault, and if I seem to lay too much stress upon Hepplewhite’s shortcomings, it is because I would the more clearly point out his many excellences. At the same time, it appears to me that whereas Chippendale has been judged on the actual designs in the “Director,” Hepplewhite has been spoken of more as regards the numberless fine specimens of the style still extant than from his book. It is at least worthy of remark that many such pieces in the style known by his name are both more important and more correct than the designs
Cabinet (Victoria and Albert Museum).
given in the "Guide." In chairs this is particularly the case even when every allowance is made for bad drawing and faulty reproduction.

The style, when the "Guide" appeared, was still to some extent in its infancy, and though George Hepplewhite probably had much to do with its inception, it did not reach its real climax till a considerable time after his death. In any case the fact remains that the style was carried on for a considerable time after the publication of Sheraton's "Drawing Book," which often occasions the greatest difficulty in assigning particular pieces to their proper maker. Though Hepplewhite design, in its most typical form, differed widely from much of Sheraton, it must be remembered that not only did the styles overlap, thus mutually affecting each other, but a considerable part of Sheraton's work, despite his flourish of trumpets, was directly formed on that of his predecessor; the square-backed chair, for instance, on plate 6 of the "Guide" is one of the phases of Hepplewhite design which, in an actual piece, would usually be ascribed to Sheraton. There is not always even a "trade mark" to go by. Sheraton used the ostrich feather and the carved drapery so often found in Hepplewhite, while in the legs of chairs and other furniture, the spade foot, the turned-out toes, the round leg and the square taper are common to both. Some of Hepplewhite's furniture, as has been said, is so widely different in design and conception, that there can be no confusion; at other times there is a grace and daintiness—a sort of refined gaiety—lacking in Sheraton's formal and somewhat
sombre precision, while it must be admitted that there are examples which could not possibly be by Sheraton, because he was incapable of such faulty design.

Knife Case in the style of Hepplewhite (Victoria and Albert Museum).

Attempts have been made to differentiate between the two men when they most closely resemble one another, not, I think, with any great success. A recent writer has stated that a shield-back chair by Hepplewhite can be distinguished from one by
Sheraton by the small convoluted ornaments at the junctions of the uprights with the shield. Even if this were invariably so, the presence or absence of a piece of carving half the size of a pea would barely be reason enough to assign a chair to one or other maker. Every additional curve, large or small, would certainly suggest Hepplewhite as the designer, but he also, as on chair 1 of plate 6, omitted this ornament. With the later work of the firm, as shown in the chair backs on plates 12 and 13 of the third edition, there is evidently still greater difficulty, for the twelve designs given are all of them obvious attempts to design in Sheraton’s manner, the chief difference being, that whereas Sheraton’s are good, few of these have anything to recommend them. In dealing, therefore, with actual pieces of furniture, it is safer to speak of periods than of men except where there is something peculiarly distinctive: and even this is more or less uncertain, for much of the Hepplewhite furniture which, judging by the “Guide,” we would date before 1790, was very possibly made in the early years of the nineteenth century.

The cabinet illustrated is a case in point; in general characteristics it more closely resembles what we are accustomed to speak of as Sheraton, yet the shape of the legs is also distinctive of Hepplewhite, as will be seen by reference to the urn stands on plates 55 and 56 of the “Guide.”

Hepplewhite did little for the evolution of the sideboard, in fact, like Chippendale, he retarded it; of the six designs given four are simply sideboard-tables, being without drawers and lacking
even the back rail brought in by Adam many years before. The two which might be called sideboards are precisely similar in construction, having a long shallow drawer in the centre, at each side of which are two narrower drawers which do not reach half way to the ground. This is the more remarkable as Shearer—who was at all events friendly with the firm—was designing, in 1788 and very possibly before, sideboards of the construction afterwards universally adopted. Hepplewhite's sideboard-tables are much more beautiful and impressive articles than his sideboards, though one or two of
them may be thought to err on the side of over-ornamentation. Hepplewhite we know from his book numbered George IV.—then Prince of Wales—among his clients and it is probable that his customers were chiefly among the rich. A sideboard-table with its proper accompaniment of pedestals and urns is more suited to large rooms than to small, and though Hepplewhite did not even in this instance completely forget the man with limited means and limited room, it is evident that he did not take kindly to the new ideas. His pedestals and vases are among the most taking of his designs, and he shows what he considers to be their importance as furniture, not only by giving six different drawings for them, but by showing them in the plan of a room furnished as he considered it should be. A similar article to the urn is the knifecase, of which two examples in the South Kensington Museum are reproduced; in Hepplewhite's plan he places square knifeboxes on the sideboard, but the urn shape is very much more distinctive of the man.

The urn, as a decorative shape, was largely employed both by Hepplewhite and others of his time, not always with the best results; it is not a very appropriate design when applied to bookcase doors, but when, as in plate 14, it forms the whole back of a chair, it looks as if it had been stolen from a cemetery.

Hepplewhite can scarcely be considered to have come up to his own standard in designing bookcase doors, in which he is surpassed by his contemporaries Shearer and Casement, as well as by Sheraton. It is to be noticed that what is known as the "thirteen" design, which was used all
Lady's Dressing-table (Victoria and Albert Museum).
through the century, occurs neither in Hepplewhite nor Sheraton, though it is given by Shearer in 1788. It by no means follows that a bookcase in which the astragals are thus planned cannot have been designed by either Hepplewhite or Sheraton, for the fact that Shearer gives it as if it were a new idea of his own is much more surprising than its exclusion by them. Yet it would be impossible not to have some doubt regarding the attribution of such a piece to one of these makers, seeing that both of them usually expended considerable ingenuity in devising departures from the ordinary in this particular.*

There were three distinct treatments in the decoration of furniture in the end of the eighteenth century. In Adam, we very often have nearly the whole of the surface covered by paint and gilding as in the French models; then we have it applied, as in the dressing-table shown, to an already intricate and finished piece of workmanship, so as to set off rather than to hide the excellence of the work as well as the beauty of the wood. This dressing-table is another example of a piece absolutely typical of its time, but not so much so of any particular designer. Sheraton, usually so light and graceful, surprises us with a somewhat preposterous heaviness in his treatment of these: the only published design of the kind which resembles this piece is one by Shearer, which, however, does not approach it either in magnificence or beauty of construction.

* It is, however, to be remembered that Hepplewhite gives the "fifteen" design on one of his bookcases.
The third method employed in the painted furniture of this time is shown in the reproduction of a settee from the collection of Mrs. McClure. General form has been by no means forgotten, but it is evident that the decoration was intended to be carried out entirely by the brush. This is an interesting piece, as it came from an old house in Edinburgh, and is probably by some local maker. One cannot readily understand why, when it was lent to Bethnal Green Exhibition, it was assigned
to Sheraton, as one of the chief points of dissimilarity between his style and Hepplewhite's is his avoidance of the oval shape except when set in some other figure, usually a square.

It has been suggested that Shearer was one of the compilers of the "Guide," and the occasional likeness to his style, and even to certain articles portrayed by him, is so striking, that it can barely escape observation. This particularly applies to the two sideboards mentioned, yet, though the general plan is precisely similar, and the decoration nearly so, it must be remembered that both men had the same aim—to represent pieces of furniture which were in actual and common use. Nor does a careful comparison of the plates lead to this conclusion, both of these given in the "Guide" being somewhat clumsy in treatment when compared with Shearer's. For the same reason it is almost impossible to accept them, and many other articles, such as the bookcases, and perhaps even the chairs, as coming from the same hand as the beautifully designed and still more beautifully decorated tables, or the tea trays, tea chests, caddies, etc., which, even if equalled, were certainly never surpassed.

If we are to judge Hepplewhite's capability as an artist by the best and not the worst of his book (which is only fair where the designs are probably by three or more hands), it is impossible not to accord him a very high place among English furniture makers. Personally, I am unable to rank him with Chippendale on the one side or Sheraton on the other, either in construction or design, yet there
is an undefinable charm about his work, even when faulty by rule, which, like some old song, touches a higher and more human note than can be attained by mere precision and correctness.
CHAPTER XXI.

THOMAS SHERATON.

It is worthy of remark that, though all the great furniture designers of the eighteenth century of whom we have any knowledge were either resident in London or had businesses there, none of them were Londoners. Several cabinet-makers of the time must have been born in the Metropolis, but wherever we have any information regarding even the minor men, we find that they, or, as in the case of the third Chippendale, their fathers, came from the provinces, and always from the North. There must have been some good men, both for design and workmanship, in Bristol and its neighbourhood, but their names are lost. The most southern birthplace of any of the famous designers is Worcestershire, which had the honour of producing Thomas Chippendale. Richard Gillow was born in Lancaster, while Sheraton—and probably Hepplewhite—came from Durham. Scotland also provided her fair share; to begin with there was Robert Adam, whose personality and style affected all the later furniture of the century, and, judging by the name, probably Shearer as well. Rannie and Haig, the partners, respectively, of the second and third Chip-
pendales, were Scotch, and the only other cabinet-maker of whose birthplace I have been able to obtain information, was a certain George Copeland—not the man who collaborated with Lock—who came from Glasgow towards the end of the century, and founded a business which is still carried on by one of his descendants.

Thomas Sheraton was born at Stockton-on-Tees about 1750, and worked there as a journeyman cabinet-maker. With regard to most of the furniture makers of the eighteenth century, it is almost impossible even to guess what manner of men they were, but if we had nothing more than Sheraton’s own writings to go upon, we could form a very fair estimate of his character and personality. The correctness of impressions so given by himself is substantiated by the quick character sketch left us by Adam Black.

Sheraton had the faculty of unconsciously drawing himself to almost the same extent as Pepys or Boswell, and he also possessed such a craving for notoriety that it was as impossible for him to write without talking of himself as it was for Mr. Dick to avoid mention of Charles the First’s head. One can scarcely imagine two more distinctly separate subjects than baptism and furniture, but in both the man is almost as much in evidence as the opinions he enunciates. He could not write a tract without telling his readers that he was a self-educated man with no college education, nor publish a book on furniture without allusions to his own poverty. While he was “racking his invention to design fine cabinet work,” he was, he tells us, “well
content to sit on a wooden bottom chair,” if he could but have “common food and raiment whereby to pass through life in peace.” If Black’s notice of him is to be taken literally, it is to be feared that he never had a superfluity of either.

Sheraton’s first publication had nothing whatever to do with furniture. It is entitled “A Scriptural Illustration of the Doctrine of Regeneration,” to which was added “A Letter on the Subject of Baptism, Stockton, 1782,” he being at that time a year or two over thirty. It is supposed that he was a preacher as well as a writer of tracts, which is rendered all the more likely by the fact that he could not keep his preaching out of his book on furniture. He discourses on Jabal, the city which Enoch built (which he supposes to have been a collection of tents surrounded by a mud wall), the Tower of Babel and Solomon’s Temple, giving numerous Biblical quotations, with the use of such phrases as “Divine Hand” and “God’s appointment,” which seem absolutely out of place in a treatise on furniture. One is, in fact, irresistibly reminded of the lady in *The Farringdons*, who says of her pork pies that, “if the Lord would only be with them in the oven, they would be the best batch of pies between here and Jordan.” Neither Mrs. Bates nor Thomas Sheraton had the faintest idea of the incongruity of their remarks, and a want of reverence for sacred things is the last fault of which he would have imagined himself guilty.

Sheraton is a typical example of the man of indisputable genius who, through some flaw of character, is foredoomed to failure. He came to
London shortly before the publication of the first part of his "Drawing Book" with the intention of setting the Thames on fire; and wherever we place

Chair similar to a design in the "Drawing Book."

him as a designer, his artistic power must be admitted to have been of such a high order as to render success possible, if not probable. Had he
only possessed the faculty of pouring oil on the waters before attempting ignition, he might have succeeded; but he was a disappointed man, fully conscious—possibly too conscious—of his own powers, and painfully so of the shortcomings of others; also he possessed "the gentle art of making enemies" to a terrible extent.

The present writer is inclined to accept Thomas Sheraton’s estimate of himself as an artist. To him it appears that this last great designer of the eighteenth century was greater than either Robert Adam or Hepplewhite; that he was, in fact, the one possible rival to Thomas Chippendale for pride of place. But there were points about him as a man which must have been very aggravating to his contemporaries.

An artist, if he is to do any good in the world, must first believe in himself, but there are limits dictated by ordinary good taste to self-assertion. It is to be regretted that Thomas Chippendale, in his first edition of the "Director," made the statement (afterwards excised) that his ribbon back chairs were the best which had ever been made, but he does not, like Sheraton, pour contempt on the work of others. I do not see how a careful comparison of Hepplewhite’s designs for chairs with those given in the "Drawing Book" can lead to any other conclusion than that Sheraton’s are vastly superior; but it was not only a sin against all the canons of good taste to point out the fact in such scornful language, but also, from the mere standpoint of business, most unwise. It was provoking that a man from the same county as himself
THOMAS SHERATON. 307

(with, in some respects, inferior artistic gifts) should have attained to opulence, while he was on the verge of starvation; but it was scarcely the way to better his position to state his grievances so spitefully.

What is perhaps a worse fault in his character is the evidently intentional omission of Robert Adam's name in his résumé of books on furniture. Sheraton's indebtedness to Hepplewhite is fairly obvious, but that to Robert Adam is so clearly marked that he who runs may read. One cannot help the suspicion that Sheraton attempted to avoid comparison by not drawing attention to the name of the master on whom so much of his style was founded—in fact, the more we appreciate him as an artist, the less we can praise him as a man. He was a conceited, cantankerous person, with no idea of the most ordinary amenities of life, and it is more than probable that his ill-tempered criticisms and omissions may have been as much the cause as the effect of his commercial failure. His power as a designer, and the recognition given to what was new in his work, would have made it an exceedingly good stroke of business for almost any firm of the time to have taken him into partnership, but even as he drew himself, he was too impossible. Money would be too dearly earned and life not worth the living at the price of daily association with such a man.

It is evident that Sheraton attempted self-education to make up for the lack of early training, and he seems to have taught himself at least a smattering of Greek and Latin, which he flourishes before the eyes of his readers. Even at a time when classical knowledge was prized and admired above
all else, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to
find a more blatant use of it than is made in his
"Drawing Book," for he not only gives the deriva-
tion of terms connected with the subject on which
he is writing, but actually of such words as
"monarchy."

His frontispiece is as laughable an instance of the
pseudo-classic as can be found even at that time,
in its curious mixture of ancient with modern, and
his explanation of it so thoroughly in keeping with
the character of the man as to warrant quotation.

"To show in as pleasing a way as I could the
stability of this Performance and the subject of
the book in general, I have, by the figure on the
right hand, represented Geometry standing on a
rock, with a scroll of diagrams in his hand, con-
versing with Perspective, the next figure to him,
who is attentive to the Principles of Geometry
as the ground of his art; which art is represented
by the frame on which he rests his hand. On the
left, seated near the window, is an Artist busy in
designing, at whose right hand is the genius of
Drawing, presenting the artist with various pat-
terns. The back figure is Architecture, measuring
the shaft of a Tuscan column, and on the back-
ground is the Temple of Fame, to which a know-
ledge of these arts directly leads."

Black's estimate of Sheraton as an artist was
deservedly high, and his explanation of his want
of success was probably at least partially right
when he said, "his abilities and his resources are
his ruin in this respect, for, by attempting to do
everything, he does nothing."
A Decorated Chair (*circa* 1785), and two later chairs.
The work on which Black assisted Sheraton is an instance of this very failing. He was not content with writing on furniture—which he knew—with frequent excursions into his limited sphere of theology and Biblical criticism, but he actually attempted, with the worst equipments in the world, an encyclopædia, in which, at the time of his death, he had got to the letter "C." He entitled it "The Cabinet Maker, Upholsterer, and General Artist's Encyclopædia," and if he had confined himself to his title, the work might very possibly have been of some value. But this was not an ambitious enough scheme for Thomas Sheraton, and the work took much wider range, including, or at least attempting to include, all general knowledge.

With all his faults of character the man must undoubtedly have had a remarkable personality, for he succeeded in getting orders, many, at least, of which he took personally, for nearly a thousand copies were sold of this last and worst work. Yet in spite of all the irons he had in the fire, and the extraordinary reception accorded to the Encyclopædia, he died, as he had lived, a poor man, leaving a wife and family without the means of subsistence. The talents, and indeed the genius, which would have made the fortune of another, only led to his utter ruin. He was too ambitious, and too conscious of his own merits, to be content with making a small though sure income as a practical cabinet-maker, for which it is, perhaps, hard to blame him. It is difficult for a man with such powers as his to recognise the fact that through the lack of some quality, which he himself may not even be able to
perceive when it exists, the elements of commercial success are left out of his nature.

The declared object of Hepplewhite's book was to embrace all current design, and I have used his name to denote a phase of eighteenth century furniture. For quite other reasons it is also more convenient, and indeed, nearly as correct, to attach a similar meaning to the name of Sheraton. This last (and some would say greatest) of the old designers had little more idea of mœcum and tuum than his predecessors. He founded much of his style on that of Robert Adam, and borrowed freely from every designer of the time, whose name and work we know; several of the plates in the "Drawing Book" being taken, almost without change, from Shearer, Hepplewhite, and Gillow.

In this he was no worse than many others, nor, indeed, were his thefts so flagrant, for he seldom appropriated either "intention" or actual design to the same extent as Chippendale; while, like him, he had the gift of making what he took absolutely his own.

The difficulty in considering "Sheraton" furniture arises from the curious position he adopted for himself—one absolutely new in furniture design, and, so far as my recollection serves me, in art of any kind.

If Adam Black—his one biographer—is to be believed, Sheraton was never a "master cabinetmaker"—only a journeyman, and that, probably, not in London. Most of the other men who issued books on the subject had businesses or shops of their own, and they reproduced their designs primarily
as trade advertisements, the commercial success or failure of publication being a secondary consideration to the grist brought to the mill. Even Robert Adam, though he did not make the furniture he designed, must have benefited very largely from the publicity gained by his frequent publications: furniture design being an integral part of his business. The Adams certainly made their books pay—and pay well—but Sheraton forgot that they only attempted publication after having attained to the premier position in British architecture, while the success of each edition added to their connection. The Adams produced their designs for private customers and they were already well paid for them before they appeared in book form. When poor Sheraton disposed of a copy of his "Drawing Book" it was probably to the trade, and no contingent benefit could be derived from its sale. He had no workshop, and if anyone who read his book had taken the trouble to hunt for the squalid shop in the dingy back street, there was not even furniture for sale; only books, stationery, and sermons.

These facts are by no means new, as every writer of note in the last ten years has both read and quoted largely from Black's account. They have, however, still left the public under the impression that Sheraton was a maker of furniture. One recent author, for instance, tells us how a chair by Sheraton may be distinguished from one by Hepplewhite through the mere workmanship, while another, usually more careful as regards facts, unhesitatingly ascribes a piece to Sheraton because of the initials T.S. being carved on it; though both piece and
initials might, with greater likelihood, be assigned to Shearer.

It has also been considered likely that Sheraton made some of the furniture for George IV. while

Regent. He certainly gives a plan of the "dining parlour" at Carlton House; but he also distinctly states in his description of it that "in some particulars it will be a little varied, as I had a very
transient view of it.” The persistence of this idea is curiously illustrated by the fact that the lady’s writing-table (which he gives on the same page as the Carlton House drawing) is still known in the trade as the “Carlton” table.

While Sheraton was a journeyman in Stockton, it is more than likely that some of the pieces he worked on were designed by himself, but it is very doubtful if they would be recognisable as his. The presumption would rather be that his designs, during the earlier part of his life, were even more influenced by Robert Adam than the later period with which we are acquainted.

It is not pleasant to be compelled to pose as an iconoclast, but this particular idol must be shattered by someone. The evidence is so strong as to be overwhelming, and it is almost out of the question that any so-called “Sheraton” furniture was either made by, or produced under the direction of the man himself. It is occasionally possible with the other cabinet-makers of the century to be certain that some particular piece is by the man whose style it resembles; but in Sheraton’s furniture we arrive at the somewhat paradoxical conclusion that the more an object is in accordance with his recognised treatment the more certain it is that he had nothing whatever to do with its construction.
CHAPTER XXII.

SHERATON'S "DRAWING BOOK."

SHERATON's remarks on the Prince of Wales's dining-parlour are very characteristic both of his diction and manner of thought: "The general style of furnishing a dining-parlour should," he says, "be in substantial and ordinary things, avoiding all trifling ornaments and unnecessary decorations." This is not only common sense, but an artistic rule observed to a greater or lesser degree by all furniture designers; for such a room as a lady's boudoir naturally suggests different furniture and fittings from that of the rooms more particularly relegated to the male members of a house.

In the Prince's dining-parlour there were at each end two of the columns so common in the architecture of the period, and Sheraton, always on the look-out for inner meanings, discourses on these. He considers them as "emblematic of the use we make of these rooms, in which we eat the principal meal for Nature's support." The primary intention, of course, apart from the mere wish to appear classical which prevailed so universally at the time, was to use these columns, not as emblems, but as a necessary part of the structure.
A pillar which supports nothing (though many of them may have been of this class) would be an architectural fault. In the days before lath and plaster became quite so rampant as they are now, the structure of the upper (and smaller) rooms had to be considered, and some such device adopted for the support of their walls. Sheraton failed to see why in a State dining-room there was any such architectural necessity, or why they would be out of place in less palatial residences; for he says, "Many of the dining-rooms of the first nobility have, however, only two columns and one sideboard, and those of less note have no columns"; just as if columns and sideboards were hall marks of rank, as, some centuries before, an additional tier on the buffet denoted the social position of the owner. The sideboards at each end of this room were nearly twelve feet in length, being of the older, or sideboard-table structure, and they stood between "Ionic columns worked in composition to imitate fine variegated marble." Sheraton's views on some things do not coincide with ours, for he goes on to say that they "have a most beautiful and magnificent effect."

The dining table stood on a central pillar supported by four claws, a style which, though used on the Continent, was, except for small occasional tables, only beginning to be employed in England. The fashion was short-lived, for, a few years after this, Richard Gillow invented and patented the extending table, which almost at once came into universal use.

With regard to the curtains, Sheraton rather
naively remarks that he "could not show them without confusion, but they are of the French kind." Like many other men burdened with overweening self-conceit he had no sense of humour, and the last idea to occur to his mind was that he might be making himself ridiculous. Only a few lines before, speaking of the same room, he says, in his best dictatorial drawing-master style, "How every other part must be drawn must be obvious to everyone who understands perspective, and no other with any propriety can attempt it." As more than three-quarters of the book is devoted to an abstruse and long-winded dissertation on perspective, this must be almost a record.

"On the drawing-room," Sheraton says, "workmen in every nation exert the utmost efforts of their genius." He gives us some interesting pieces of information regarding the furniture and fittings of the time. In France there were two sets of chairs in a drawing-room—one for show and the other for actual use. This did not pertain in England, though our designers employed methods perhaps even more doubtful for obtaining grandeur of effect. The glasses above the pier table "are often made to appear to come down to the stretcher of the table; that is, a piece of glass is fixed in behind the pier table, separate from the upper glass, and, by reflection, makes the table to appear double." This piece of glass was either fixed on the dado or on the frame of the table itself. Again, "The arches above the windows are merely artificial, being only wooden frames put up,
strained with canvas, after which the same kind of stuff which the curtains are made of is formed to appear like a fan, and drapery tacked on to it. His plan, in this instance, is not taken from any particular room, but before making it he saw the Prince of Wales's, the Duke of York's, and other noblemen's drawing-rooms. While the furniture is evidently his own—as are also the decorations—he is careful to explain that he does not intend this design as a model for the ordinary drawing-room: "It partakes principally of the character and ordinance of a State saloon-room, in which are entertained ambassadors, courtiers, and other personages of the highest stations." Without doubt the room, as he gives it, is eminently fitted for its intended purpose, but it is at least doubtful if it would have been much less sombre in effect if he had not kept this particular end in view. The ornament of Chippendale, Adam, and Hepplewhite suggests gaiety, bordering, now and again, on the frivolity of its French inspiration; in Sheraton's hands ornament seems rather to add severity than subdue it.

Sheraton also describes and illustrates the Prince's Chinese drawing-room, but those writers who ascribe it to him have not read his letterpress. This is to some extent excusable, for it is questionable if anyone but the compositors ever managed to read the "Drawing Book" through from start to finish—certainly to do so with the first three hundred pages or so which deal with perspective would be a sheer waste of time. Sheraton seems to have kept clear of the Chinese craze, and, though
he praises this room, it is in a very half-hearted fashion: "The whole effect, though it may appear extravagant to a vulgar eye, is but suitable to the dignity of the proprietor."

If we take Sheraton’s later work into consideration, he was the most unequal of any of the eighteenth century designers, and even in the “Drawing Book” it is difficult to understand how some of the plates can be by the same man. On the one hand
he carried simplicity almost to excess, though redeeming it from severity by a delicacy of touch and a certainty in the use of straight lines such as was possessed by no other English designer of the time; on the other he every now and again tortured his composition with an infinity of needless and unconvincing ornament. His limitations are all the more surprising in that he fails exactly where we would have expected him to succeed. The man who could treat a somewhat intricate design for a chair-back and make it look simple, ought surely to have done something great in such pieces of furniture as library bookcases; yet it is in these that he most manifestly fails. They are massive without being grand, and entirely lack the architectural feeling imparted to them by Chippendale and his successors.

Sheraton's reputation, however, has not suffered on this account, for the work of other men (most notably that of Shearer) is almost universally described by his name. I illustrate a specimen of the kind usually attributed to him. It is of his period and, moreover, resembles his general style sufficiently to make the generic use of his name almost correct. It is, in fact, just what we would have expected Sheraton to produce when called upon to design such an article, but what, unfortunately, he did not do. On the contrary, he attempted to give architectural feeling by sheer weight, and movement by sudden and violent changes of form, instead of the slighter differentiations of line and surface which we find in Chippendale.
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If we look only at the middle part of the plate on page 414 of the "Drawing Book," the design, though not up to his best standard, is pleasing enough. It would make a very good secretaire bookcase, a class of furniture in which he was, strangely enough, greatly more successful. As it stands, the pediment, instead of joining the piece into one homogeneous whole, cuts it up into three, and it would be difficult to imagine anything more unsuitable for the ends than the pepper-castors he adopted.

Yet nothing by Sheraton could be altogether bad, and I would direct attention to the delicate tracery of the doors, and the satisfying simplicity of the cornice.

It would, therefore, appear wrong to apply the term "Sheraton" to bookcases such as the South Kensington specimen, but it is doubtful whether the cure might not be worse than the disease. A large number of existing specimens are very closely allied to the designs given by Shearer, who, of the later men, seems to me to be supreme in this branch; but still more, the one illustrated among them is almost as unlike his work as Sheraton's. It is easy to say who this specimen is not by. It was not made by Adam, Gillow, Hepplewhite, Shearer, or Sheraton, and these are our whole stock of names for the period during which it might have been made. I have endeavoured to resuscitate the artistic personalities of several of the old-time workers, but where, from our limited knowledge of the men, a piece cannot be assigned to any one designer, it would
seem better to be frankly wrong than pedantically incorrect.

Sheraton's is certainly an extreme case, for, while the other designers made immensely more furniture than they illustrated, we have practically the whole of Sheraton's; at least for that part of his career with which we associate his name. We might be correct, without even knowing it, by using "Chippendale" or "Hepplewhite" as generic terms; whereas if a design does not occur in one of Sheraton's publications, it is a thousand chances to one that it is by another man.

On the other hand, though his indebtedness to some of his contemporaries is indisputable, there was a greater difference between his work and what went before it than in any other case except that of Robert Adam, while the effect he had on the general style of his time is perhaps more distinctly marked. To describe the furniture influenced by him merely by dates would be unfair to Thomas Sheraton, and, until someone invents a new term which will satisfy all the possibilities, we may very well be content to use his name somewhat loosely as descriptive of influence and period rather than actual work.

The same failure we find in Sheraton's bookcases is noticeable in almost all his heavier furniture. The lady's cabinet dressing-table (page 332 of the "Drawing Book") is perhaps the worst. It is a marvel of ingenuity, and it has everything for which the heart of woman could wish; but it is both ugly and ungainly.

His "summer bed in two compartments" is
"A Summer Bed."

21*
the sole instance of such a thing in English eighteenth century design, yet whatever novelty there may have been in the idea, the execution is strongly reminiscent of Mayhew.

His "State bed," which, by the way, strangely resembles one made "for their Majesties" by Robert Adam, appears to me to be the one exception. This seems to have been one of his attempts to gain royal patronage, for he says that a bed "is not likely to be executed according to this design except under the munificence of a royal order." He has no false delicacy in speaking of it. It is "suitable to the dignity of a prince, and worthy the notice of a king"; but it does not appear to have got beyond the stage of design. From the crown on top of the dome (supported by Justice, Clemency, and Liberty) to the lions' heads and paws on which it stands, the whole structure bristles with emblems, which it takes several pages of letterpress to explain—all words from the Greek having their derivations given in footnotes. He is evidently anxious to pose before the eyes of his prospective royal customers as much for his classical knowledge as his power as a designer. He also thought it well they should know of his religious writings. Authority, represented as "a matron or old lady," has a book resting on her knee to denote that civil authority is of divine origin. A footnote refers to a text in Romans, but, in case he might be suspected of Jacobite tendencies, he is careful to explain that he has not "even the most distant view of maintaining hereditary right of succession as sacred."
Sheraton was undoubtedly very eccentric, and it is my belief that he was more than a little mad on religious subjects, if not on others. Towards the end of the book, after speaking of the Greek deities, he actually says that, "It may not be improper to advertise some that these . . . . are merely the fabrications of poets and idolaters," ending the disquisition with a statement of the Christian Creed, which may not here be quoted without irreverence. If he was mad enough to suppose that there was some real danger of anyone becoming a worshipper of the old gods, it might be a possible explanation of what can be least understood regarding his work. We could have only pity for the man whose brain-power was sapped by mania and over-work; but nothing save contempt for the artist who wilfully debased his art. It is at least charitable to give him the advantage of the doubt, and put down the terrible decline in his last work to mental affliction.

While speaking of workmen, Sheraton tells us that a good chairmaker is seldom equally successful at cabinet-making. It would seem, in looking at eighteenth century furniture as a whole, as if the remark might apply to the designers as well as to the workmen. Where they did not specialise like Manwaring and Shearer, they are, with the single exception of Thomas Chippendale, weak either in one branch or the other.

It is greatly for this reason that I cannot agree with those critics who place Sheraton higher than Chippendale. As regards chairs, if we allow for the immense difference in aim and intention, it is
difficult to separate them, and if one of the names must go first, it should probably be Sheraton's.

But, even judging him by the "Drawing Book," and leaving out of consideration his fearful productions at the last (which I endeavour to forgive
and forget), I do not see how he can be ranked with the older man as an all-round designer of furniture. I cannot help thinking that, just as Hepplewhite is sometimes placed before the others because of existing specimens resembling his style—but which he did not make—so Sheraton, as in bookcases, is credited with the work of others.

The page of six chair backs is from the "Drawing Book," and it can well be claimed for them that they form the best such page in any of the books, even Chippendale’s being much more unequal in merit. The first two are more or less on Hepplewhite’s lines, the elongated urn being a favourite ornament with him, but they are a very distinct improvement on his treatment, though they are, perhaps, the least satisfying of the set. Nos. 3 and 6 are variants of the lyre-back, introduced from France by Robert Adam, and in them will be remarked Sheraton’s use of straight lines in conjunction with curves. Just as he set an oval inside a rectangular figure, so he made use of straight lines to temper his curves. A good deal has been written on the difference between Hepplewhite’s and Sheraton’s shield-back chair. An author already quoted says it consists in the existence or absence of a minute convolution at the points of junction between the uprights of the back and the shield. Another declares the difference to be a question of construction: the shield in the work of one being supposed to be made separately and the uprights run into it, while the other designer produced his uprights to the top of the chair, thus forming the sides of the shield.
If Sheraton had made these chairs himself, which, it appears, he did not, and if we had some scores of undoubted specimens both from his workshop and Hepplewhite's, we might be able to satisfy ourselves on this point of carpentry; as it is, it cannot help us at all, for all Sheraton's designs and a great part of Hepplewhite's were produced by other cabinet-makers, who probably pleased their own fancy as regarded questions of construction.

The real difference is evident enough, and it is curious that it should have occasioned any difficulty. Sheraton had the same objection to the shield as to the oval. In this chair, as also in 3, 4, and 6, the curve of the top rail is varied by the employment of a straight line. Hepplewhite used the diametrically opposite method, and with a straight top rail, nearly always added a curve to counteract it—a device only once used in the "Drawing Book." The one, in fact, saw weakness in an unsupported curve while the other dreaded the severity of a straight line.

I illustrate a chair from the South Kensington Museum, based on and nearly identical with a published design of Hepplewhite's, which, when compared with No. 5, will sufficiently explain the different use of the shield shape by the two men.
CHAPTER XXIII.

SHERATON'S USE OF EXISTING DESIGNS.

It is by no means an easy matter to estimate Sheraton's influence on the furniture design of his time, nor, indeed, how much of the style which he seems to have evolved was new, and how much already in existence. French furniture had, in the closing years of the Monarchy, become more severe, and it is at least doubtful if Sheraton was the first to be affected by the change.

It takes no knowledge of design to appreciate the difference in intention and feeling between Hepplewhite's general style and that of Sheraton. In many cases the difference is much more easily appreciated than put into words, yet everyone who turns over the leaves of the two books must be conscious of its existence. Sheraton was the chief apostle of the new school, and, were it not for the personal spite which he could not help showing towards his great rival's work, we could scarcely do other than admit him to be its originator as well; but, judging him out of his own mouth, that is well-nigh impossible. If Hepplewhite's designs—and especially his chairs—were not in accordance with "the newest taste" when Sheraton
first published, and if Sheraton never worked in London, it is evident that he did not originate, but merely followed the new line of feeling; for we can scarcely suppose that his Stockton work could have affected the cabinet-makers of the Metropolis.

In his introduction to Part III. of the "Drawing Book"—where design proper may be said to begin—Sheraton states that his intention is "to exhibit the present taste of furniture," and he goes on to tell how careful he has been to make his book adequate in this respect. "I made it my business," he says, "to apply to the best workmen in different shops, to obtain their assistance in the explanation of such pieces as they have been most acquainted with." This not only applies to the mere method of construction, but also, as we can see from the rest of the book, to some of the designs.

Sheraton possessed undoubted originality, but he could not, like Robert Adam, afford to preach something entirely subversive of existing styles. His book being intended primarily for the trade, he was necessarily hampered by the requirements of his customers, and he pours out his woes to the "sympathising reader" on the difficulty of pleasing all his customers:

"Some have expected such designs as were never seen, heard of, nor conceived in the imagination of man; whilst others have wanted them to suit a broker's shop, to save them the trouble of borrowing a basin-stand to show to a customer. Some have expected it to furnish a country ware-room, to avoid the expense of making up a good
bureau and double chest of drawers with canted corners . . . . Yet according to some reports the broker may find his account in it, and the country master will not be altogether disappointed."

This quotation will sufficiently explain the necessity for Sheraton, though he had no wares of his own to advertise, including some of the commoner and absolutely unornamental articles, and why some of the designs for more important pieces are of very inferior merit is possibly capable of a similar explanation.

In several instances Sheraton illustrated pieces sold in certain shops, in others he makes some slight addition, while probably more than he acknowledges in his letterpress are not designs but drawings of actual pieces. Of the lady's dressing-table (page 325) he says, "These side glasses are an addition of my own, which I take to be an improvement: judging that, when they are finished in this manner, they will answer the end of a Rudd's table at a less expense." Even in this "addition" there is nothing new, as the arrangement of the glasses is practically taken from the Rudd.

The two knife-cases, of which he speaks on page 321, are also not his own designs, as he describes several different ways in which they are (not "may be") manufactured, and goes on to say, "As these cases are not made in regular cabinet shops, it may be of service to mention where they are executed in the best taste, by one who makes it his main business, i.e., John Lane, No. 44, St. Martin's-le-Grand, London." In this
Decorated Chair (circa 1803). Victoria and Albert Museum.
instance he was very probably attempting to hurt an enemy as well as oblige a friend, for Hepplewhite's knife-cases were one of his specialities; certainly those of the urn shape are far more beautiful, and are now much more sought after than the rather ugly tortuous-fronted specimens illustrated by Sheraton.

Two plates in the "Drawing Book" represent library steps of the multum in parvo order, both of which are from actual pieces made and sold by Campbell, the upholsterer to the Prince of Wales. Of the first, Sheraton says: "There are other kinds of library steps which I have seen, made by other persons, but, in my opinion, these must have the decided preference both as to simplicity and firmness when they are set up." In the second plate Sheraton advertises his friend's wares still more openly: "Those masters, however, who do not think it worth their while to be at the trouble of introducing any essential alteration in them, may have these steps from Mr. Robert Campbell & Son, Marylebone Street, London, with a sufficient allowance for selling them again." It is on account of these and similar plates that Sheraton has been credited with a considerable amount of mechanical ingenuity, but, in each case, his letterpress disclaims any merit as to the invention. I have also seen it stated that he held a patent for improvements in pianos. This may be so, but I have failed to find his name in the index of the Patent Office.

Though, with the exception of the knife-cases, these particular plates are more in the nature
Decorated Chair (circa 1803). Victoria and Albert Museum.
of plans than designs, I am inclined to consider it probable that some of the most puzzling inequalities in the "Drawing Book" may be similarly explained, as also some of the more unexpected departures from its general style. Among the latter I would class the tripod candle-stands, which are simply debased Adam. That these are not designs but drawings from existing specimens is obvious from his description. He "could not show to advantage more than three lights, but in reality there are four."

Of the other class—those which are "Sheraton" in style, but not up to his standard of design—it is much more difficult to speak, particularly as they comprise a considerable proportion of the book. Two of the most noticeable of these are the cabinet (page 330) and the lady's cabinet dressing-table (page 332). In both of these there are not only unsupported curves in the top, but they are emphasised by being repeated a few inches below, thus breaking a rule which he elsewhere adheres to so rigidly. The description seems to bear out this supposition. Of the cabinet he says, "The style of finishing them is elegant, being often richly japanned, and veneered with the finest satin wood." Observe how differently he speaks of his "new designs for chair-backs"; "No. 3 may be either a drawing-room chair painted, or it may be made a handsome parlour chair by taking out the top drapery and making the bottom of the banister plain; if for a parlour chair the top rail is intended to be stuffed and covered with red or green leather, or it may be entirely of mahogany
panelled out of the solid: but if a drawing-room chair, it must be stuffed and covered to suit the seat."

Too much stress must not be laid on the claim of novelty, which is not always made even where it exists, nor on the fact of the articles being already manufactured and sold, for, as will be seen later, Sheraton designed for the trade, and the original designs might possibly have been by him. Neither is it possible to ascribe all that is poor in design to others, for there would seem to be no doubt regarding the authenticity of the bookcase alluded to in the last chapter. To cut out much of the purely cabinet work from the "Drawing Book" would certainly raise Sheraton as an artist, but I merely give the theory as a personal opinion, not as a fact capable of proof.

Much of the argument depends on whether Sheraton ever had a workshop in London. I cannot say I think it likely, but there have been so many statements to the contrary that I have enquired into the only one of which I am aware that appears to be more than mere guess work.

There are some curious chairs in the Soane Museum, which are said to be the work of Sheraton himself. The arm-chair is fitted with the ordinary legs of the time, but the single chairs have thick, turned legs, which give a most ungainly effect when contrasted with the more delicate work of the backs. The late Mr. Birch told me that these chairs were made specially by Sheraton for the Bank of England, and that a similar set were to be seen in the Governor’s room, the
reason for their manufacture being that the ordinary tapering leg was considered too fragile for use in such a public place.

Sir John Soane, who was the architect for a great part of the Bank, was also intensely interested in all art matters, as can easily be seen by even a cursory view of his collection. He probably knew more regarding the workers of his time than any other man; but he, unfortunately, transmitted his knowledge orally. Had he written down the statement repeated to me it would have settled, once for all, the dubious point regarding Sheraton's actual work in his early London period; but when such a story passes through so many mouths, it is easy to see how, without any intention of being other than exact, the whole meaning may be changed. A "Sheraton chair," for instance, is a phrase of widely different meaning from "a chair by Sheraton," yet one might easily have been exchanged for the other. Nor is the story absolutely correct in its facts. By the courtesy of the Bank of England I have had the opportunity of examining the very interesting collection of chairs preserved in the building. There are chairs similar to the arm-chair illustrated, but there are none with the heavy turned leg of the single chairs. The story has undoubtedly some truth in it, and these Soane Museum chairs were most probably at one time in the Bank. One cannot imagine why Sir J. Soane should have ordered such clumsy chairs for his own house; but, being almost as keen a collector of curiosities as of art objects, we can understand his becoming possessed of them,
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either by exchange or purchase, during his connection with the Bank. I have gone somewhat fully into the question of their authenticity, as the statement is so well known and made, not

Arm Chair at Soane Museum.

only by better authority, but with more circumentiallity than any other of which I am aware. The South Kensington attributions appear to be mere guesses, and as there is not even any evidence as to who originally made the guess, they may

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very well be passed over as, to say the least, unreliable; but where a specific statement is made on such authority, it demands careful consideration. If, however, it is inexact in fact, it can scarcely be held to be evidence as regards mere phrase. I confess that when I took up the enquiry I was more than prepared to find a flaw in the claim, but that was because it was in direct contradiction to such evidence as we have. Until there is positive proof of an article having been made by Sheraton's own hands during his London period, I think we may be fairly safe in considering that he confined himself to design.

It is probable that Sheraton, though he did not make furniture while in London, designed considerably more than appear in his books. He is said to have made drawings for the Gillows, and he certainly executed one for Messrs. Broadwood. This would probably have been forgotten along with the rest had not Sheraton considered it worth his while to have a plate of the piece engraved by Barlow, which he seems to have published separately. It is of a piano made for the Queen of Spain, and Thomas Sheraton was not the man to throw away such a chance of self-advertisement. The plate would be interesting if only because it is his first essay at printing in colour. On the top it is entitled, "A Plan Elevation & View of a Grand Piana (sic) Forte, made for the Prime Minister of Spain by M. Broadwood & Son, Instrument makers to his Majesty"; while below it is more fully described as a "Grand Pianoforte, C to C, in a Satin Wood case ornamented with Marqueterie,
SHERATON'S USE OF EXISTING DESIGNS.

Chair at Soane Museum.
and with Wedgwood's & Tassie's Medallions, manufactured by John Broadwood & Son in 1796 for Don Manuel de Godoy, Prince of the Peace, and by him presented to Her Majesty the Queen of Spain." The piano itself, which is now the property of an English collector, is a very magnificent piece of furniture. The case is of the old harpsichord shape, but the legs are stout tapering squares, the older trestle form having been practically abandoned some years before its construction. On the centre of one of the sides is a brass plate embossed with the royal arms of Spain, while round its entire length are small but beautiful Wedgwood plaques, said to have been designed by Flaxman expressly for this piano. The board above the keys is inlaid with a decoration of musical instruments and floral devices in the later English style, and the introduction of other woods in the large surface is striking and well managed. It is in reality what Sheraton wrongly claimed for his huge monstrosity of a bed, "worthy the notice of a king," for it is not only magnificent, it is supremely simple. It is not till the eye has first been satisfied by the general effect that we discover how retention of power has been achieved through a perfect wealth of decoration by attending to proportion in the ornaments employed combined with broad and bold treatment of surfaces. I have been compelled to speak disparagingly of much of Sheraton's larger cabinet work, but I have nothing except unmixed praise to bestow in this instance, the more so as he might easily have been led away from simplicity by
Adam's example. Sheraton had, probably through his friend Campbell, seen some of the royal palaces, and, as remarked before, his state bed strongly resembles Adam's. He must also, in spite of the fact that he never mentions it, have seen the book published by the brothers Adam, in which there is a plate of a harpsichord designed for the Empress of Russia. I do not know of any musical instrument of the school and period at all comparable to these, and judging by the beds, it might have been expected that there should be some resemblance between them, if not in actual design at least in intention; but they are not even distantly related. Adam attained his richness of effect by florid lines and large and conspicuous ornament, and the harpsichord, though beautiful enough in its way, does not attain to the dignity of the piano we are considering.

The introduction of Wedgwood plaques into furniture was fairly common in the end of the eighteenth century, and many beautiful pieces were made in the style, which are deservedly very highly valued. Of them all, I question if there is one which is more satisfying than this. The medallions themselves, made, as they were, just before the secret of their manufacture was lost, are delightful examples both as regards design and quality, and are each of them deserving of careful study; but their subservience to the general scheme is a point which was too often lost sight of by old designers. Usually we find them forced on the eye, as if the piece were made merely to frame them. Here, by a touch of genius, they
actually frame the piece; they are used, in fact, like the chased brass-work of the best French examples. They are works of art, and would be beautiful anywhere, but they do not call attention to themselves to the disadvantage of the whole.

It is worthy of remark that there is no piece in the "Drawing Book" of Sheraton's own design in which plaques were intended to be used. His only mention of them is in his description of a commode in the Prince of Wales' drawing-room, which is another of his trade puffs. "In the frieze part of the commode is a tablet in the centre, made of an exquisite composition in imitation of statuary marble. These are to be had, of any figure or any subject, at Mr. Wedgewood's, near Soho Square."
CHAPTER XXIV.

SHERATON'S EMPIRE PERIOD.

By what is practically a general consensus of opinion, the names of Chippendale, Hepplewhite and Sheraton stand out from those of contemporary cabinet-makers. I take it that this is very greatly owing to their published works being more within the reach of the ordinary man, for no one has yet paid anything like special attention to Robert Adam, and ranked him fourth on the list. These four names have been put in every conceivable order and it is both difficult and dangerous to say that any placing of them is wrong, for, though I have more than once criticised the reasons adduced, the aims of the men were so different that the question comes to be not so much a matter for the trained artistic judgment as of the force with which a particular motif appeals to individual taste.

Each of the great quartette is supreme in some line or other. It is open to us to admire the grandeur of conception, the just proportions, and the architectural feeling of Chippendale, the ornate simplicity and unfailing eye for colour of Adam, the dainty grace of Hepplewhite, or the severe but absolute correctness of Sheraton at his best.
SHERATON'S EMPIRE PERIOD.

It is, unfortunately, as easy to find fault as it is to admire. The flamboyance which runs riot through so much of Chippendale's work is so obvious that it barely requires mention. Adam is inclined to be finikin; Hepplewhite shows a most uncertain knowledge of the first principles of design, and Sheraton lacks the higher artistic qualities of imagination.

Of these four great designers, Robert Adam is the only one of whom it can be proved that the style which bears his name was originated by himself, and, with this single exception, several men might be mentioned who possessed more distinctive artistic personalities, and who, either from mannerisms or excellences, were more recognisable. Even Adam, from the fact that so much of his work was necessarily left to assistants, is by no means an easy study, but in the case of each of the others there are special difficulties.

It has already been pointed out that it is unfair to judge Chippendale entirely by his later and published works, and that even the "Director," particularly in its third edition, is not always a safe criterion of his artistic abilities, on account of the latitude allowed to the engravers. It has also been, I think, shown that Hepplewhite's book is the work of so many hands as to render a thorough grasp of his personality elusive, if not impossible.

At first sight the consideration of the "Drawing Book" appears much easier, but the more it is studied the more does it seem that it is here the difficulties culminate. Sheraton, like Chippendale, employed several engravers, but whereas in the
"Director" the difference in their styles is easily discernible, in the "Drawing Book" evident care has been taken to make the treatment as similar as possible. I, at least, confess my inability to tell, without looking at the signatures, whether Terry, Barlow or Caldwell executed the plate. This gives a look—in my opinion, a delusive look—of homogeneity. Further research shows that this appearance is intensified by the evident fact that the original drawings seem to have been the work of one man, for even where we are told in so many words that Sheraton had nothing to do with the design, the drawings are just as distinctively his. In Hepplewhite's book there is no resemblance as regards artistic reproduction between several classes of articles. His urn, knife-cases and brackets, for instance, are drawn and reproduced not only correctly, but with considerable feeling, while the chairs are neither correct in perspective nor proportion. In some the shield-back is squat and ungainly, in others it is elongated to almost as great an extent, while the attempt to portray arms is absolutely childish. There is none of this in Sheraton's book, where both proportions and perspective are absolute, and each plate might have served as a copy for one of his pupils. In many, even towards the end of the book, when he has already had his say on theory, the perspective lines are engraved, and in the others it is evident that each drawing was done by rule. As someone said of the works of a certain well-known artist, "they would be photographic, except that they are not even photographically wrong." They are immensely better
than the worst of Hepplewhite's plates, but just as far behind the best in artistic feeling.

To say that Sheraton's plates attained a dead level of mechanical correctness is not very high artistic praise, but, before criticising him too severely, it is well to remember the purpose of the book. Any cabinet-maker who knew his work could
construct an article from one of his engravings, while it would be impossible to reproduce the original piece of furniture from some of Hepplewhite's; but the very qualities which made his book serve its purpose so admirably at the time, render it much less reliable as a record of Sheraton's actual designs.

Sheraton, among other things, was a drawing-master, and prided himself very considerably on his ability as a draughtsman. No other man was allowed to put pencil on paper for him, and the commonest objects, of which a mere plan would have been amply sufficient, were drawn by himself, even when they were admittedly the design of some contemporary firm. The preaching, tract-writing drawing-master was most painfully conscientious, and took as much trouble with a gouty-stool or a "chamber-horse" as on some of his finer cabinets. A chamber-horse, by the way, was an invention which was intended to give the benefits of what Americans call "horse-back riding" to invalids or people confined indoors. The seat was mounted on strong spiral springs, and at each side were handles by which the person using it worked himself up and down. It probably had some value as an exerciser, but it is difficult to see why is was included in the "Drawing Book." It is evident that it was not a novelty, for though Sheraton carefully describes how it should be made, he gives no directions for its use. The plate is undoubtedly one of the large number inserted in the book to help the sale of articles already in the stock of different firms.
Empire Fire Screen.
As the objects illustrated in the "Drawing Book" are all engraved in an almost precisely similar manner from Sheraton's own drawings, it is evident that except where there is a distinct statement in the text, the only method of discriminating between Sheraton's work and that of others is by the designs. It is doubtful how far these may be trusted as evidence, for there are great inequalities in much of the work which can with certainty be ascribed to him, even in the "Drawing Book" itself, while the absolute bathos of his later work would seem to argue the possibility of anything, however bad.

Much well-deserved derision has been poured out on Sheraton's "Empire" style. It is, indeed, the worst phase of a bad movement, and no criticism can be too strong. But it is unfair to accuse him of originating the style in England. He stood out against it till he seems to have been on the verge of starvation, and what is a poor artist to do when people will not look at his best work, but insist on buying his worst? Who was responsible for its introduction it is impossible now to say, but it is at least certain that the style was in general demand some years before Sheraton adopted it.

It is well to remember—even to insist on the fact—that history and furniture are very closely allied, but it is at least doubtful how far politics or faction are influences. It has been stated over and over again that the use of the Prince of Wales's feathers by Hepplewhite showed that he belonged to the "Prince's party." Had the badge been employed as a decoration by only him something might have been argued from it; but as it was universal
Empire Dressing-Glass.
among the furniture makers of the time, it can only be taken as a compliment to "the first gentleman of Europe." Great things might, and, in fact, did happen without affecting style in furniture, but a personality was a different thing. The rebellion of 1745 is unmarked, unless it be in the rather paradoxical way of French influence becoming suddenly stronger. It is in vain that we look for traces of the French Revolution or the "Reign of Terror," but Napoleon's appointment as first Consul is shown by the birth of a new style commemorating his Egyptian and Syrian campaigns. Great man as the Duke of Wellington was, Waterloo was passed over in silence by our furniture designers, but Trafalgar stimulated them into immediate action. Yet, be it remarked, it was not because the English fleet had shattered the French, but because the victory had been won by a man whom the whole of Britain idolised and delighted to honour. Fortunately, from an art point of view, this had no lasting effect on style. A couple of miniature cannon mounted in the arms of a chair are not very beautiful objects, and anchors, cables and tridents do not readily lend themselves to design.

Sheraton was by no means behind his fellows either in the number or consummate ugliness of his designs. He gives two "Nelson" chairs, which are probably the worst productions of his last period. In both the splats are formed of anchors and cables, and in one the front supports (affixed to the centre of the front rail) are a couple of inverted dolphins, bound together by a piece of ribbon with an erect trident between them. He
also designed a window "To the memory of Lord Nelson." There is a medallion on the top, and the whole thing bristles with emblems. Tridents and flags are introduced wherever possible, and the curtains hang (very ungracefully) over the fluke of an anchor, which is suspended from the cornice by a cable, while the Victory is seen through the window. Sheraton seems to have had a joyless mind as well as a joyless life, but, disappointed man as he was, he could scarcely have suggested turning reception-room windows into gravestones if his mind had been properly balanced. It is not that the design is bad, but that it is mad. Had it been good, it would have been even more noticeable, for the treatment of window curtains was a thing in which Sheraton, even at his best period, consistently failed. He drew them "out of his head," and were it not that, in other particulars, he conclusively proved his genius, one would be tempted to another repetition of the old jibe that "there was wood enough left to make several more," for they resemble no material in the world except badly carved wood. Nor is the arrangement pleasing. Upholstery was not his business, yet a man who could design the back of a chair to absolute perfection might reasonably have been expected to make his lines compose; and it is somewhat of a shock to find that there is not one of his many attempts at draping a window which is not utterly atrocious. Probably no artist was ever so sublimely unconscious of his own limitation as Thomas Sheraton.

In preaching "men—not measures" as con-
trolling influences of furniture design, I am aware that I am by no means orthodox; and also that, so far as "Empire" furniture is concerned, there is a certain amount of historical reason for taking the opposite view. Some part of the English people always have, and probably always will, rank the national enemies either as heroes or martyrs. Even in the spacious days of Elizabeth, when it was a Christian duty to hate one's enemies, especially if they were Spaniards, there was a minority—certainly a small one—which would have welcomed the Armada. In Napoleonic times the position was accentuated, and quite a considerable number of Englishmen were disloyal. How great that number was will never now be known, but it has probably been under rather than over-estimated. I remember an old lady, whose father belonged to this party, who regretted to her dying day that Napoleon's flat-bottomed boats never crossed the Channel. I have not, however, been able to trace a piece of "Empire" furniture to a family connected with the movement. They had certain short methods of dealing with treason in those times which made it inadvisable for a man to go out of his way to publish such opinions, and it is more than questionable if this party had anything to do with the general adoption of the "Empire" style. The reason would rather seem to be that the eyes of the civilised world were directed to France, and focussed on her central personality.

Whatever the influences may have been that caused the sudden and wholesale change in our furniture design, the change itself is to be deplored
"Horse" Dressing-Glass.
most deeply. It could not have come at a worse moment. We had sloughed what was false in the French influence as it affected Chippendale; and Adam, Gillow, Shearer, Hepplewhite and Sheraton had gradually built up a school which, though still founded on the French, was unmistakably English, and which may well be regarded as the culmination of our furniture design. If the evolution had continued along the same lines, though we might not have attained to anything better, we would at least have had something nearly as good, instead of the terrible chaos of which this craze was the precursor.

There is no turning back in art. Once the wrong path is taken, even though it may lead to another and a better highway, the road that is left can never be found again; and when France and England made this lamentable departure, it meant the death of anything fit to be called furniture art for nearly a century.

Yet good "Empire" furniture, even that made in England, which is admittedly inferior to the French models, is by no means to be despised, as may be seen from the samples chosen for illustration, and reproduced by the kind permission of Sir Walter Gilbey.

The inlaid commode is of a slightly earlier date, and of a somewhat rare style. The inlay is typically English, of about the end of the eighteenth century, but the shape and mounts are both taken from the French. It is interesting in itself, but is still more so as showing that even before "Empire" furniture gained the ascendancy, some English cabinet-makers
Commode in French Style. From Sir Walter Gilbey's collection.
were forsaking the chisel and the brush for metal work. Nor is this specimen among the first attempts to introduce French brass-work into English furniture. There is some doubt as to whether Chippendale’s earlier French commodes were intended to be treated in this manner; but of one plate, dated 1760, we are distinctly told in the text that the ornamental parts were to be cast in brass. Chippendale’s plates are quite different from our illustration, but they have one point in common—though the general design is more or less purely French, the workmanship is just as distinctly English. In none of them is the attempt made to form a definite pattern in the French manner, by veneering small pieces of wood over the surface with the grain running at different angles.

This, nevertheless, was done by some other maker or makers, and several examples exist in the Royal collection. Two very interesting specimens are illustrated in Mr. Laking’s “Windsor Castle Furniture.”

There would seem to be no reason for doubting their English origin, though the chief arguments adduced are the inferiority of the metal work and the substitution of a wooden for a marble top.

The existence of these specimens shows the danger of laying too much stress on negative evidence. There is nothing at all resembling them either in the publications of the time or the preserved drawings of Robert Adam and Richard Gillow. A possible explanation of this is that our knowledge of eighteenth century furniture designers is practically limited to London and Lancaster, and there is no
definite information regarding the capable cabinet-makers who undoubtedly existed in the West of England, where the commode illustrated was probably manufactured. The scarcity of such examples, and, indeed, the short life of the much more distinctly marked "Empire" period, is due to the fact that our craftsmen were greatly inferior to their French contemporaries in metal work.

Sheraton, as already stated, had no part in introducing the "Empire" style, and he had (fortunately) just as little effect on the pieces actually made. Most of his plates in the "Encyclopædia" are beneath contempt, and I have just as great difficulty in treating them seriously as if they were the ravings of a madman, which is, practically, the light in which I regard them. His old aims are lost sight of entirely. He forgets his objection to an unsupported curve, and eschews the straight line of which he was such a master. He is absolutely unconscious of the vileness of his designs, for of one of the worst he says that "in my opinion it exceeds in beauty because of its unity and simplicity. This is, indeed, my constant aim in designing, and constitutes the perfection of art." This would be a somewhat self-assertive, but none the less true, claim as regards his earlier work; when applied to the plates in the "Encyclopædia" it is sheer nonsense.

There are one or two plates in the "Drawing Book" of which the sanity may be doubted. There is, for instance, a sideboard with an urn underneath (page 409) in which actual flames are portrayed as issuing from the urn. These, however, are the
exception; in the "Encyclopædia" they are the rule. There is a zoological nightmare of weird and fearsome animals, usually taken from classic myths, but without either reason for their employment or taste in their execution. Chimera's heads are among his particular favourites, and he uses them in every possible and impossible place. Where, instead of using a lion's foot, he rests a table on three of these heads, he gives as his exquisite reason for their introduction in such a position "the convenience of having a sufficiency of wood to admit of a screw"!

The plates of the "Encyclopædia" are printed (and very badly printed) in colour. In almost all the colours are badly matched, and in one instance the choice is little less than revolting. He rests a library table on a three-toed foot (possibly intended for a harpy's), which he prints in flesh colour, thus giving a horrible resemblance to some shocking human deformity.

It is impossible to write of this great designer without treating of this phase of his work, but surely forgiveness as well as pity can be extended to the man who fought against a bad style till he could fight no longer, and only yielded when broken down in mind, body, and outward estate.

THE END.
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